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A BROKEN BRIDGE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CONJURER DICK," "BETTER THAN VICTORY," ETC

IT has been declared by a profound observer of human nature that the most awkward predicament a man can be placed in is to be unexpectedly called upon to mix in society without his trousers. I daresay it is a trying position, but there are worse "fixes" than even that. I say it advisedly, that if, after my recent experience, it were to come to a question of dispensing with either my nether garments or my spectacles, I think—I really think—I should embrace the former alternative.

As the reader will probably have inferred, I am extremely—exceptionally—short-sighted. Without my spectacles, and with a competent dog, I should make a very tolerable blind man. I think I should know whether the parties who dropped coppers into my hat were short or tall, male or female, but there my knowledge would end. *With* my glasses (the very strongest concaves known to optical science) I can rub along very fairly; but without them I am lost, helpless, imbecile. My spectacles are the last thing I take off at night, and the first I put on in the morning. Meanwhile, they rest, ready to my hand, on my little *table de nuit*, in company with my watch and water-bottle. Not long ago I had the misfortune to drop them on the floor, and had to crawl about for twenty minutes on my hands and knees, with my nose to the carpet like a pig grubbing for truffles, before I could find them. On another occasion I rashly took off my glasses in a barber's shop, in order to have my hair cut. One fiend in human form swept them off the table, and another put his foot on them, and I had to be led ignominiously home by a small boy belonging to the establishment. These, however, were but mild and trivial experiences. The catastrophe was yet to come.

It was late in last November. I had been spending the evening with some musical friends. The party was small, but successful; and I had contributed in some small degree (my friends were good enough to say in a considerable degree) to its success. My rendering of the "White Squall" and "Tom Bowling" had been much admired, and I had every reason to suppose that I had made a favourable impression in a Quarter in which—in which, in point of fact, I was rather anxious to make a favourable impression. It will therefore be readily imagined that I delayed my leave-taking till the latest possible moment. I had before me a short ride by train (the last train), a walk of a few minutes, and then an omnibus (the last omnibus) would bear me to my dwelling, which was situate in Wisteria Terrace, Highgate. The first stage of my journey was quickly accomplished, but when I got out of the railway station I found that the weather had materially changed for the worse. It had begun to do something which was not exactly raining and not exactly snowing, but a sort of unhappy medium between the two. A vague sort of fog, too, was gathering in the air. However, I turned up the collar of my coat and turned down the brim of my soft felt hat, and stepped out manfully for the omnibus, for there was no time to be lost. When I reached the spot where it should pass, it had not yet come in sight, and I sheltered myself within the doorway of a shop to await its arrival. When safely ensconced, and beginning to look about me, I found that the sleet had settled on my spectacles, increasing my normal difficulty of vision. I took them off and began to wipe them with my pocket-handkerchief, when—oh, horror!—the bridge suddenly snapped in the middle and I was left at midnight over two miles from home and as blind as a beetle. The omnibus would take me the greater part of the way, but I had still nearly half a mile to walk beyond, and how I was to do it, Heaven only knew, for I didn't. However, it is proverbially useless to cry over spilled milk, and it is equally ineffectual (for I tried it) to swear over broken spectacles. A moment later the omnibus came up, and after an ineffectual attempt to get into it through the horses (thereby causing the driver to express a harsh and wholly unfounded judgment as to my sobriety), I finally succeeded, by dint of holding up one of the severed glasses to my right eye, in clambering into the vehicle, and finally, after blindly plunging on to various passengers' laps and being violently pushed off again, in settling down into a seat. "Room for one on either side," the conductor had shouted. There may have been, but I couldn't see it. At last I ascertained, more with my elbow than my eyes, that there was a vacant space on my right, and I dropped exhausted into it. There was a scrunch somewhere between me and the cushion, followed by a scream from a female voice:

"If he hasn't bin and sat on my best Sunday cap!"

"My good lady," I gently interposed, beaming mildly round in the direction of the voice.

"Good lady! *Your* good lady, indeed! If I was your good lady I'd take the conceit out of you, you nasty, spiteful jackanapes!"

"It was quite accidental, I assure you," I mildly urged.

"Don't tell *me*, with your 'accidentals.' Accidentally done a purpose, that's what it was. I see him look straight at the box, and then he claps his ugly great carcass squash down upon it."

Here the conductor interposed: "Look here, missus, just keep a civil tongue in your head. It's your own fault, for puttin' o' the box on the seat 'stead of under it. 'Tain't likely the gen'leman would a set upon it a purpose."

"I certainly did not," I said, mentally resolving to give the conductor sixpence when I got out. "I am very sorry I have injured the lady's property, and if she will tell me the value I am quite willing to make it good."

"Didn't I say so?" said the conductor. "The gen'leman can't say no fairer than that, can he, missus? Any gent may take a drop once in a while, and when he's had a drop he naterally sits down 'eavy like. But if he pays up fair and honourable, what more can a gen'leman do?"

The man's intention was friendly, no doubt, but the form of his defence, to one who like myself is only five or six removes from a teetotaller, was extremely humiliating, and my views as to the sixpence underwent considerable modification.

"Conductor," I said, "you are wrong—quite wrong. I assure you I have only taken——" But here I paused. A delicate mind naturally hesitates to explain these little personal details, however innocent, to an omnibus-load of total strangers. As a matter of fact I had only taken three glasses of champagne, one of dry sherry, and a mere nothing of cold whisky and water. The man mistook the cause of my hesitation.

"All right, sir," he said, and I felt—I couldn't see him, but I *felt* that he winked. "It's the werry dose I takes myself."

It was useless to argue the point, and I turned to my neighbour, who had cooled down considerably when she found that there was a prospect of compensation for her damaged property.

"What do you value your cap at, madam?" I inquired.

"Well, sir, since you're so pressin'," she replied, "the cap was four-and-eleven in the Upper Street only two weeks since. Then there was a rose I put in special, thirteenpence halfpenny, and a extr'y bow of ribbing at fifteenpence a yard, and cheap at the price. Call it seven-and-six, and we'll throw the box in."

It struck me that the good lady was disposed to make a market of her misfortune, but I was not in a position to contest the matter, and there was such an overpowering wave of gin and peppermint each time she turned my way that I was glad to close the transaction. Accordingly I opened my purse, and, holding it close to my eyes, managed to count out the required amount, and handed it to her. As ill-luck would have it, at that moment the

omnibus, which had pulled up to set down a passenger, went on again, and the sudden movement jerked the open purse out of my hand and scattered its contents on the floor of the vehicle. I made an effort to pick them up again, but with small success, and in a manner which, I felt, tended still further to confirm the conductor's mistaken impression as to my sobriety. The other passengers benevolently aided me to recover my scattered property, but with only limited success. After settling for the damaged cap, I had had left in my purse a sovereign, some six or seven shillings in silver, and three halfpence. The three halfpence were restored with the most conscientious exactness, but the silver had dwindled down to four shillings and a threepenny piece, while the sovereign had vanished altogether. I mentioned the deficiency, and everybody began to search again still more diligently, but without effect.

"It is an unpleasant incident," said an elderly gentleman.

"A *very* unpleasant incident," replied an elderly lady.

"Unpleasant for all of us," said another gentleman, "if there really *was* a sovereign in the purse." His intonation implied clearly that he entertained a doubt upon the matter.

"Oh, as to that I'm quite sure—" I said; but the last speaker, who was now just getting out, interrupted me:

"I really don't think, sir, if you'll excuse me, that you are in a condition to be 'quite sure' about anything."

It was a most unfounded insinuation, and I should have liked to wither him with some scathing retort, but I always require time to think of anything particularly withering, and by the time I was ready with an appropriate rejoinder he was several yards off. It would have been hardly dignified to shout it after him, and I therefore remained silent. We rode on a little farther, but it was an uncomfortable journey. An atmosphere of suspicion pervaded the omnibus. The passengers all seemed more or less to suspect each other, but it was evident that they unanimously suspected *me*. A little farther the omnibus stopped, and the conductor put his head in:

"Waterloo Station. Anybody for Waterloo Station?"

"Waterloo Station!" I exclaimed in horror. "Isn't this a Highgate 'bus'?"

"Highgate!" said the conductor. "Lor', you must be farther gone than I thought you was."

I was farther gone than I thought I was, and in the wrong direction. I paid the man fourpence for having brought me three miles out of my way, and having cautiously descended, made my way (through an ankle-deep pile of swept-up mud, by the way) to the pavement. What was to be done now? There were no more omnibuses, and after waiting in the street for some ten minutes or so, and hailing two private carriages and a milk cart, under the belief that they were four-wheeled cabs, I suc-

ceeded in arresting a wandering Jehu, and struggled (through another heap of mud) to his cab.

"No. 33, Wisteria Terrace, Highgate," I said as I got in.

The man drove on a few yards, and then got down and came to the window.

"Ain' yer parding, guv'nor," he said hoarsely, "*wheer* was it as you was wishin' to be drove to?"

"Highgate, Wisteria Terrace, No. 33," I said, reversing the order for greater clearness.

"All right, guv'nor, we can do it, me an' my 'orse can; but it's a mortal long way, and we ain't bin 'ome to our tea yet."

It struck me that if my charioteer had missed his tea he had supplied its place with something stronger, but I reflected how cruelly I myself had been recently misjudged in the same particular, and I dismissed the unworthy suspicion.

"Well, my friend," I said, "you surely don't want to go home to your tea at one o'clock in the morning."

"No, guv'nor, I won't deceive you. It ain't that ezactly. We can do it right enough, me an' my 'orse can, but we lives in the Old Kent Road, an' it's uncommon late, an' a mortal long way, an' no mistake. What was the name as you give me?"

"Wisteria Terrace, Highgate, No. 33."

"It *is* a mortal long way, ain't it, now? But if you'll stand a trifle extry—I don't deceive you, guv'nor—we'll do it, me an' my 'orse will, though we *ain't* had our tea."

I was not in a condition to argue the point, and I knew Wisteria Terrace was outside the radius. "Look here, my friend," I said, "will five shillings satisfy you?"

It was not a business-like way of putting the matter. I felt that as soon as the words were out of my mouth, and so did he.

"No, nor yet six," he retorted. "I don't deceive you, guv'nor; it's worth seven-and-six of anybody's money to take you that distance at this time o' night."

"Very well, you shall have seven-and-six," I replied wearily. "But drive on, for Heaven's sake, or I shan't get home to-night!"

He drove on, but at a terribly slow pace, for his horse seemed well-nigh knocked up. Twice in the next half-hour he got down and came to the window, once to ask the address for the third time and once to inquire whether I had such a thing as a pipe of tobacco about me. When he found I had not, he assumed an injured expression, and reverted to the subject of his tea. It was obvious to me by this time that he was considerably the worse for liquor, but I was in his hands, and could only hope to reach home sooner or later. It was apparently destined to be later, for after another half-hour or so he came to the door once more.

"Look 'ere, guv'nor, I've brought yer to 'Ighbury right enough, but blame me if I know any Whiskeria Terrace hereabouts."

"Wisteria Terrace," I corrected. "And I didn't tell you Highbury, but Highgate."

"Axin' yur parding, guv'nor, but you *said* 'Ighbury, as plain as suet dumplings. But if 'Ighgate is more your wishes, we can do it, me an' my 'orse can. But it'll be a extra shillin'."

"All right," I said, "you shall have it; but for goodness' sake drive on and let us get there."

He drove on again, and after another three-quarters of an hour or so succeeded, by dint of questioning passing policemen (for naturally I could not see to direct him), in bringing me to Wisteria Terrace, and set me down at No. 33.

"You will have to wait while I go in and get you your money," I said, "for I have not enough in my purse."

"Right you are, guv'nor," he replied; "and if so be as you *did* happen to have a drop o' somethin' short 'andy—not to deceive you, guv'nor—it'd warm a chap's cockles uncommon. It's cold work up there on the box, an' it is a mortal long way, ain't it now, guv'nor?"

"You shall have it," I said, glad to have reached home on any terms. "Step inside, if your horse will stand still, and I'll give it you."

"That 'orse stand still!" he replied with a chuckle. "That's his best pace, that is. Lor', guv'nor, you might 'arness that 'orse to a church, you might, an' he wouldn't run away with it."

By this time I had descended, and groping my way cautiously up the gravel path had reached the front door. I took out my latch-key and let myself in. It struck me that the lock was somewhat stubborn, but it yielded, and I passed into the hall, followed by my charioteer. The gas was out and all was dark, save where a dim light, just darkness visible, indicated the position of the window on the landing. I felt my way to the hall-table, where on such occasions a candle and matches were wont to be placed by my housekeeper, but she had apparently forgotten them. I opened the dining-room and groped my way to the mantelpiece, on one corner of which there was usually a provision of lucifers, but again I was disappointed. There was nothing to be done but to find my way to my own bedroom on the first floor, where on my dressing-table I always kept an ample supply. Accordingly, with nearly as much precaution as if I were attempting the ascent of Mont Blanc, I began to mount the stairs. I proceeded as softly as I could, for being a bachelor I only occupied part of the house, and I did not wish to disturb my neighbours. I don't know why boots should creak more after midnight, but they certainly do. I would not have believed it possible that half-a-dozen pairs of boots, far less one, could have made such an atrocious noise. And the stairs, too, seemed to have joined the conspiracy, for they creaked and cracked as if the house was coming down. When I had proceeded seven or eight steps in

this fashion I felt that as a man and a Christian I could not go any farther like that. I must take my boots off. Accordingly I did take off one of them, which rewarded my precaution by falling down half-a-dozen stairs, with an audible bump at each. I was more successful with the other, and again resumed my journey, holding on well to the handrail, till I reached the door of my own room. Here the geography was more familiar, and I was advancing with calm confidence to my dressing-table, when my head came in violent contact with some extremely hard substance, which I instinctively guessed to be a bedpost. A female voice said in an alarmed tone, "Is that you, Philip?" and a baby began to cry lustily. Now my name is not Philip, but Augustus. I sleep in a French bedstead, and I don't own a baby. I am not an excitable person, and rather pride myself, under ordinary circumstances, on my coolness and presence of mind; but such a combination in my bedroom at two o'clock in the morning, accentuated by a severe blow on the nose, was enough, I submit, to upset the equilibrium of even the calmest of men. I began to feel nervous—I own it. Obviously the first step towards clearing up the matter was to get a light, and consequently I made no reply, but still moved forward in the direction of the dressing-table. Instantly there was a cry from the same voice:

"Help! Thieves! Help!" followed by a blast, loud and long, of the most tremendous whistle I ever heard in my life. This was followed by the sound of a violent scuffle in the hall beneath, and then some one rushed violently up the stairs and into the room, exclaiming, "Where is he? where is the villain?" It suddenly dawned upon me that *I* was the villain, and I put myself into a scientific posture of self-defence, but in vain. A pair of long arms, apparently swinging every way at once, beat down my guard, and after a momentary struggle grasped me firmly round the shoulders.

"I've got him," shouted the proprietor of the arms. "Now, Eliza, throw a blanket over his head while I hold him."

There was a momentary pause, and the voice said in a tone of muffled expostulation, "Take care, Liz; that's *my* head you've got hold of." The apparent mistake of identity, however, was speedily corrected. A woolly mass descended over my head, and I was borne, half suffocated, to the ground. I have a vague general impression of somebody sitting upon me, but herein I may be mistaken. It must not be supposed that I submitted tamely. On the contrary I continued to roar "Murder!" "Fire!" "Thieves!" and "Police!" as loudly as a mouth full of blanket would let me. The baby, not being hampered by a similar impediment to speech, roared still more lustily. My impression, so far as I was able to think at all, was that I had somehow interrupted the proceedings of a gang of burglars engaged in rifling

my apartments, though even then I wondered (and I think the fact is some proof of my presence of mind) why on earth they should have brought "Eliza" and the baby with them. I also remember wondering how many minutes it usually took to suffocate anybody with a blanket, when I heard another person rush up the stairs and enter the room. A gleam of light shone through my blanket.

"We've collared the cabman," said a strange voice, "and my mate's a watchin' him downstairs. Have you got the other one, sir?"

"Yes, here he is, with a blanket over his head, and the sooner you can get a pair of handcuffs on him and lug him off to the station, the better."

Handcuffs! Station! Then somebody, it appeared, took *me* for the offender. Meanwhile I was suffocating. "Help! Help! Police!" I roared.

"The police ain't far off, my fine feller," said one of the voices. "You needn't holler so loud. But you may as well take off that blanket, mister, or you'll make the chap a case for the coroner 'stead o' the magistrate. I'll be answerable for him now."

The blanket was accordingly removed, to my great relief. The gas had by this time been lighted. Being still in my purblind condition, I could not distinguish details; but that certainly wasn't *my* bed, and that certainly wasn't my dressing-table; nor was the lady sitting up in bed—in point of fact it wasn't my room at all.

"Now, you atrocious scoundrel," shouted the person who had removed the blanket; then in a changed tone, "Good gracious! why, surely it's Mr. Prebble."

"Prebble is my name," I said, "but really" (my native politeness reasserting itself even under these trying circumstances) "I haven't the pleasure——"

"My name is Gibbes," said my interlocutor, "your next-door neighbour. There is some mistake, I am afraid, though I can't imagine, for the life of me, how it has come about."

I did, or rather I didn't, see, for I couldn't see anything without my spectacles, but I understood. My bemuddled cabman had set me down at the wrong house, and in my sightless condition I did not detect the error. Wisteria Terrace was the property of a speculative builder, and it was found on subsequent inquiry that all the front-door locks were exactly alike, and that the same key would open every house in the Terrace. My next-door neighbour was a journalist, whose professional duties kept him out very late at night, and he had returned home just in time to see the cabman set me down at his door, and to observe my cautious journey up the gravel walk. Not unnaturally, perhaps, he assumed that we had burglarious intentions, and only waited to

secure the assistance of the policeman before following us in and proceeding to capture us as described.

The *éclaircissement*, of course, was gradual, for there was much to be explained on both sides. Before the explanation had proceeded far, a voice from the bed (where the blanket had by this time been replaced) said in chilling tones :

"Excuse me, Philip, but don't you think the rest of the matter might be discussed downstairs?"

Philip being of that opinion, we proceeded downstairs accordingly, and there, in the dining-room, found the cabman in the custody of a second policeman. On seeing me he said with an injured voice :

"Look a here, guv'nor; you never said nothin' about this. If I'd knowed as you was on the burgling lay, blow me if I'd a brought you under fifteen shillins."

"It's all a mistake, it seems," said Policeman No. 1 to his mate. "The gent's only a amatoor like; lives next door, and got into the wrong crib by mistake."

"Wha-at!" said his mate with a disgusted look. "Then hasn't there been no crib-cracking at all?"

"Seems not," said the other. "Anyhow, the gent has squared it."

"And we ain't even to run in the cabman? Well, this is a go! Our time regler wasted, along o' people not knowin' their own minds. Come along, Jim." And with an expression as if his faith in human nature was for ever destroyed, the disappointed constable preceded his mate into the street.

Mr. Gibbes lent me the wherewithal to settle with the cabman, including a reasonable compensation for his temporary loss of liberty, and then assisted me to regain my own dwelling. Since my experience of that night I have had a new Chubb's lock, warranted unique, put on my front door, and I never venture out, even to the post office round the corner, without a second pair of spectacles in my pocket. Gibbes and I are very friendly, but I have never been able to make much way with his wife. I could not understand the reason until, chancing one day to make some reference to the subject, he revealed to me the mystery.

"Don't seem to get on with the missus! No, old boy, and you *never will*. You've done the one thing a woman never forgives. You've seen her in curl-papers!"

PARIS UNDERGROUND.

MOST people have heard of the Catacombs of Paris, but few have visited them, or are aware of their vast extent. They were originally stone quarries; the material used in building the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Hôtel Cluny, the older portion of the Tuileries, and many other of the public edifices of Paris, having been derived from this source. So extensive were their ramifications that of Paris within the walls more than a tenth part is said to have been honeycombed in this manner. The Trocadero Palace, wherein the International Exhibition of 1878 was held, stands in the centre of one group of these quarries, known as the *Carrières de Chaillot*. These, however, are comparatively small. The principal quarries are on the left bank of the Seine, the largest extending under a great part of the Faubourg St. Jacques and Faubourg St. Germain, from the Luxembourg Gardens on the north to the Boulevard St. Jacques and Montparnasse Cemetery on the south, and from the Collège Rollin on the east to the Rue Vavin on the west. Another group, under the Faubourg St. Marcel, extends from the *Marché aux Chevaux* (which lies at the junction of the Boulevard St. Marcel and the Boulevard de l'Hôpital) in a south-westerly direction, towards the *Place d'Italie*, and about half a mile beyond. It must not be supposed that the whole of the areas thus indicated are undermined, there being a good deal of unbroken ground between the various galleries, but the excavations are very extensive. The length of the subterranean galleries in the group last mentioned is estimated at about six miles, and that of the galleries under the larger (St. Jacques) group, at nearly twenty miles. They are reached by seventy staircases at different points, the principal one being in the *Place Denfert Rochereau*, which lies between the *Cimetière Montparnasse* and the *Sceaux Railway Station*. There is one in the *Rue Dareau*, one attached to the *Hospital of Val de Grâce*, one in the *Rue Bonaparte*, one in the *Rue Mouffetard*, another at the *Barrière du Maine*, and two in the *Jardin des Plantes*. There are other quarries of large extent outside the walls, particularly at *Chatillon*, *Gentilly* and *Montrouge*, but with these we have at present no concern. Some of the catacombs are said to have been in existence for fifteen centuries, dating back to the occupation of the Romans. From time to time they have been extended, or fresh galleries excavated as further supplies of stone

became necessary ; but the knowledge of their existence seems to have been confined to comparatively few persons, and the only use made of them was by bandits as hiding places, and by smugglers as a means of conveying contraband articles into Paris without payment of duty. In the seventeenth century, Claude Perrault, a celebrated architect, when building the Observatory, struck into the galleries of the larger group, and found it necessary for the security of his foundations to fill up some of them, but he does not appear to have had any notion of their immense extent, nor does public attention seem to have been in any great degree attracted to the subject. In 1774 it was noticed that there was a serious subsidence of the soil between the Boulevard Neuf and the Barrière d'Enfer, and a commission was appointed to inquire into the matter. After the usual manner of commissions, the inspectors took their time, and no active steps were taken until April, 1777, when a house in the Rue d'Enfer suddenly collapsed, and it was found on examination that it had sunk into one of the old quarries. This little incident showed the authorities that the matter was really urgent. An inspection was made of the subterranean galleries, and where necessary they were properly underpinned or otherwise supported, so as to prevent the occurrence of further accidents. The stone, it should be mentioned, is a soft sandstone, extremely friable, and the necessity for artificial support is illustrated by the fact that as lately as 1880, while an omnibus was passing along the Boulevard d'Enfer, the roadway suddenly gave way under it, to the no small consternation of the passengers.

It was not, however, till within the last hundred years that the quarries have served the purpose or received the name of Catacombs. To explain how they came to be used for this purpose it will be necessary to go back a little. Of the old cemeteries of Paris, the largest and most popular was that known as the Cimetière des Innocents, which stood on the site now occupied by the Halles Centrales, or Central Market. A church dedicated to the Holy Innocents stood in the centre, and round it a graveyard of considerable extent. This was surrounded by cloisters, paved with tombstones, and lined with memorial tablets. Above these cloisters were rough wooden sheds, used as places of deposit for bones. It was thought a good work to do something for the Cemetery of the Innocents, and pious persons occasionally presented a new arch to the cloisters. The celebrated Nicolas Flamel, whose wife was buried in the cemetery, added two of such arches, one in 1389, another in 1404.

There were vaults beneath the church, but as early as the sixteenth century these were so full that it was not uncommon to see coffins ranged around the walls, waiting till room could be made for them. The great were privately interred, but the common people had to be content with the *fosses communes*, great

pits in which 1,200 or even 1,500 corpses were buried together. There was a queer belief, not entirely confined to the lower classes, that the soil of the Cimetière des Innocents had the quality of absorbing the flesh of a corpse in twenty-four hours. When the ground was so full that no more could be accommodated, the pit of longest standing was opened, and the bones turned out of it were shovelled pell-mell into the charnel houses above the surrounding cloisters. The total area of church and graveyard did not exceed 10,000 square yards, and it is hardly to be wondered at that it became a centre of corruption. As early as 1554 it was accused of causing plague, and two eminent doctors were appointed to inquire into the matter. They reported that its use ought to be at once discontinued, but no notice was taken of their recommendation; and so matters went on for another two hundred years. In 1757 another commission was appointed, this time consisting of three doctors. Like their predecessors they reported strongly against the use of the cemetery, but again nothing was done, and meanwhile the cloisters were used as a sort of market, milliners and drapers plying their trade there, and public letter-writers establishing their desks against the pillars. In fact, the place was a sort of low-class Palais Royal. In 1765, the scandal growing daily greater, the Parliament issued an edict that there should be no more interments in the cemetery, but nobody took any notice of it. Matters went on as usual for another fifteen years, but in 1780 a horrible occurrence compelled decided action. It is computed that the cemetery was at that date *twenty-six feet deep* in dead bodies, and the soil was so raised by successive interments, that the floor of the church, which was formerly above the level of the ground outside, was now some feet below it. In February, 1780, a resident in the Rue de la Lingerie, which adjoined the graveyard, going into his cellar one morning, was met by so horrible a stench that he fled in terror. Further examination showed that the earth, swollen by recent rains, had burst the intervening wall, and disgorged a heap of corpses into the cellar. The story spread. The authorities woke up at last. On the 1st December, 1780, after being used for nearly 700 years, the cemetery was finally closed.

Still, however, it was felt to be a centre of infection. Meanwhile, a new vegetable market was greatly needed. The then Lieutenant-General of Police, M. Lenoir, suggested that it should be erected on the site of the old cemetery, and that the accumulated remains therein should be transferred to the ancient quarries. There was considerable opposition to the plan. It could not be carried out without the sanction of the Archbishop of Paris, and he was at first by no means favourable to the suggested arrangement. By degrees, however, his objections were removed, and in April, 1786, a certain portion of the quarries was consecrated, and thenceforth received the name of the Catacombs. The Church of

the Innocents was pulled down, the monuments removed, and the work of transferring the bones began. The men employed worked day and night; the waggons bearing the remains started from the cemetery at dusk each evening (priests walking beside them to give the removal due solemnity), and reached their destination, an adit specially prepared in the Rue Tombe Issoire, at nightfall. Here the solemnity ended, the bones being shot pell-mell down the shaft, to await more formal arrangement at a later period.

A market, known as the *Marché des Innocents*, was erected on the site of the old cemetery; but wholesale as the removal of bones had been, it was far from complete. When from time to time any building operations took place upon the site, fresh heaps of bones were sure to be unearthed. Indeed, as late as 1830, during the revolution of July, when, after severe fighting in the market place, some of the combatants desired to bury their dead on the spot, and opened the ground for that purpose, they came upon a number of skeletons. Similar discoveries were made when, during the Second Empire, the *Marché des Innocents* made way for the *Halles Centrales*.

Many other Parisian churches and cemeteries have since transferred the remains of their dead to the keeping of the Catacombs. These are now under the care of a regular corps of workmen, who attend to the arrangement of the bones, keep the galleries in order, and are constantly on the watch against subsidences of earth, which would otherwise be of frequent occurrence. The galleries have been carefully surveyed and their course compared with that of the superjacent thoroughfares. Indicating tablets are put up at frequent intervals, so that a skilled person can at any moment name the street, and even the number of the house, which is above his head. Without such knowledge, or a competent guide, however, woe betide the ill-fated wretch who should venture to explore these grim recesses. Beneath the Rue de l'Abbé de l'Épée, just outside the Ossuaire, or catacomb proper, is seen a tomb in the angle of a wall, to which a terrible tradition attaches. Here lies Philibert Aspaïrt, formerly porter of the Military Hospital of Val de Grâce. The hospital lies above a portion of the Catacombs, and from it descends one of the seventy staircases of which we have spoken. In an evil hour the ill-fated porter took it into his head to make a voyage of discovery in the Catacombs. On November 3rd, 1793, he descended the winding stair. Lantern in hand he entered that awful labyrinth, *and he never came back*. How long he lived, or how he died; how long his feeble lantern kept alight, or for how many hours or days he may have wandered in darkness, ere death put an end to his sufferings, are among the secrets of the Catacombs. For eleven years his fate was not even known; but on April 30th, 1804, some workmen, exploring in course of their duty some of the less used passages, came upon a human skeleton. Flesh and

clothing had alike crumbled into dust, but the buttons of the coat remained, and by these and the bunch of keys that lay beside the corpse, it was identified beyond doubt as that of the unfortunate Philibert Aspairt.

The Catacombs may be visited by special permission, obtainable of the Chief Engineer of Mines, who is also Inspector General of Quarries. Formerly such visits could only be made four times in the year, on the occasion of the quarterly inspection of the quarries, and for some occult reason they were made at midnight. They are now made on the first and third Saturday in each month, and at the less witching, but decidedly more pleasant hour of 1 p.m. On the occasion when we ourselves made the descent about 150 persons had received the desired permission. The appointed place of meeting was in front of a low shed-like edifice (euphemistically termed a "Pavilion"), in the Place Denfert Rochereau, adjoining the Boulevard d'Enfer. Outside the building an old man and woman were driving a brisk trade in candles, it being a rule that each person descending must be provided with his own candle. The price of a candle with a rough extempore sort of candlestick, consisting of a slip of wood and a circular disc of cardboard, was fivepence; that of the "candlestick" alone, threepence. After waiting some little time outside, we were admitted into the courtyard of the building; five minutes more, and we were allowed to pass into a second courtyard, where we formed ourselves into a horse-shoe-shaped *queue*, after the fashion adopted at the French theatres, the foremost extremity abutting on a little door in a corner. Here we waited for another five minutes or so (the French official loves to make the public feel his power), and then the little door was opened. Our cards of admission were given up at the entrance, and having lighted our candles, we began our descent into the bowels of the earth by a steep winding staircase of some ninety steps. On reaching the bottom we found ourselves in a narrow passage, three to four feet wide and six high, cut like the staircase, in the solid rock. In Indian file, each bearing his or her candle, we marched along; and after following this passage with sundry turns for fully ten minutes we reached the Ossuaire, or catacomb proper, our route hitherto having been through the unconsecrated portion. Above the portal is the inscription:

HAS ULTRA METAS
REQUIESCUNT, BEATAM SPERM EXPECTANTES.

Here the passages widened into broad vaulted corridors, with a space some seven feet wide down the centre of each. The sides of the passages were formed of human bones, not set in mortar or cement, but apparently merely stacked, somewhat after the manner of bottles in a cellar. The main surface of the wall was formed by the extremities of leg and arm bones, relieved at

various heights by horizontal rows of skulls (generally three in the total height). Here and there might be seen the orthodox skull and cross-bones, held in position by wires. How far the bed of bones extended back on either side there was no means of ascertaining, but it appeared to be several feet in depth. Here and there was a side alley barred by a chain. Through these no one was permitted to pass; but gazing down them, far as the eye could reach on either side, were bones, bones, bones, in endless succession. At intervals there was a tablet fixed against a wall of bones, stating that these particular remains were removed from a given church or cemetery at such and such a date, conspicuous among them being the enormous mass of bones removed from the Cemetery of the Innocents. It would seem that the authorities of other cemeteries were not slow to follow the example of the Innocents, the inscriptions showing that St. Landry and St. Julien des Ménétriers transferred their accumulation of bones to the Catacombs in 1792. The Convent of the Bernardins did the same in 1793, and the Church of St. André des Arts in 1794. Others followed at comparatively short intervals, down to quite recent times, to the immense sanitary advantage of the city. Here on these, on the sandstone columns or piers left standing to support the roof, were inscriptions from Lamartine, Rousseau and other writers, and occasionally Scriptural quotations in French or Latin. At one point we noted the familiar verse from the 1st chapter of St. Luke:

"Deposuit potentes desede, et exaltant humiles."

Truly a fitting text for such a place of sepulture, where in like obscurity lie the highest and the lowest, the noblest and the vilest, coward and hero, patriot and traitor, the silver-tongued orator and the heaven-sent poet, cheek by jowl with the idiot and the imbecile. Oh, pitiful end of human greatness! that no man living shall say which is which, which was the prince and which the pickpocket, which was Marat and which was Charlotte Corday, which the bloody-minded Robespierre, and which the tender-hearted St. Vincent de Paul. Men of science, victorious generals, haughty aristocrats, ferocious *sans-culottes*, preachers of magic eloquence, writers of world-wide fame; here they lie, lost in that heap of bones, and, by the irony of fate, the thief and the prostitute may rest on the highest level, while prince and cardinal lie on the ground below, and the skull that living ruled a kingdom may be kicked aside, trampled under foot by a careless workman. The mighty are indeed cast down!

Proceeding onward we come to a cenotaph known as the Tombeau de Gilbert. It bears the inscription:

"Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive,
J'apparus un jour, et je meurs;
Je meurs, et sur la tombe où lentement j'arrive
Nul ne viendra verser des pleurs."

At this spot mass is yearly said in the Catacombs on the *Jour des Morts*, the tomb of Gilbert being used as a temporary altar. At another spot we were shown a basin of water, known as the Fontaine de la Samaritaine. Gold fish are kept in the basin, but a curious thing happens to them. After a short time in the darkness of the Catacombs they lose their brilliant colour and they become blind; a curious instance of the familiar truth that natural faculties are forfeited by disuse. The passage through the Ossuaire occupies about half an hour, walking pretty rapidly, for the guides do not encourage loitering, and few would care to run the risk of going astray by lingering behind the rest of the party. At Tombe Isoire we leave the Ossuaire, and from this point have yet some ten minutes' walking through narrow passages before we again ascend to the upper air. We emerge in the Rue Dareau, some considerable distance from the point where we entered the quarries. Here we find our friends the candle merchants, who politely intimate that if we have no further use for our candles and candlesticks, they will be happy to relieve us of them. They do not offer to return any portion of the price paid; but as it would require considerable strength of mind to carry a partially-burnt candle on a greasy slab of pasteboard through the streets of Paris, and as even the most economically-minded could not easily put it in his pocket, the suggestion is generally adopted. The astute traders go on their way rejoicing, having received for half an hour's use of the article about double its full value.

But the mysteries of Paris underground are not yet exhausted. There are other subterranean regions besides the Catacombs to explore. Again fortified with an order from the Prefect of the Seine, we meet a party of adventurous spirits, this time on the Place du Châtelet, close to the theatre of the same name. A small open tent or canopy covering an iron trap-door in the pavement marks the place of our *rendezvous*. The party numbers about eighty persons, nearly one-third being ladies. At one o'clock the trap-door in the pavement is opened, and descending a spiral iron staircase, we find ourselves on a sort of quay, lighted at one end by a window looking out over the Seine. A sort of canal about six feet wide is at our feet, flanked by a stone pavement about half that width, on either side. Adapted to the width of the channel and running on an iron rail at either edge, are low carriages, after the fashion of open waggonettes, with brass hand-rails all round and lighted by moderator lamps. Of these there are seven, each temporarily fitted with cane-bottomed round seats, one facing to the front, one to the rear and one to either side. Each seat accommodates three persons. The channel below the carriages is filled with a black-looking fluid. We take our seats and begin a voyage of discovery in the sewers. The cars are propelled by men, in clean white canvas suits, four

to each car running along the pavement at the side. At a few yards' distance we come to a point where the tunnel branches to the left. By means of a turn-table the cars are turned at right angles to their former course, and we find ourselves in the great Egout, or sewer, de Rivoli, under the well-known street of that name. Here the channel becomes narrower, and the *trottoir*, too, narrows down to about eighteen inches. The men no longer run beside the cars, but attach long cross handles to them and propel them by that means, themselves walking in front and rear, for the cars now overlap the pavement on either side. Above us are two enormous black mains, supported on iron pillars and carrying the drinking water of Paris. Beside these is a smaller tube used for the purposes of the pneumatic telegraph, and attached to the crown of the arch are heaps of wires belonging to the electric telegraph.

"Where are the gas mains?" we inquire, but we are told that by a wise precaution they are kept apart, and buried deep in the earth, where an accidental leakage would be less hazardous than in this network of tunnels. At intervals we pass an archway in the wall at our side, with sometimes an ascending flight of steps, sometimes the iron ladder leading to a *regard*, or man-hole, in the pavement above. These smaller arches are the sewers of the intersecting streets, the names of which are indicated on a tablet beside each opening. There have been showers during the morning, and from most of the channels a black stream is running, losing itself in that over which we are passing. In the case of sudden and heavy rains, we are told, the rush of water is so great that the men employed have to run for their lives, but all is so well arranged that with ordinary care they need not incur any serious danger. There are man-holes at intervals of fifty yards, and in addition to these there are chambers of refuge above the vaulted tunnels where they can remain till the rush of the torrent is over, and in which at other times they keep their working tools.

After about half an hour's ride we reach the Place de la Concorde, where we leave the cars and embark in small barges or punts, lying in a rather wider channel, turning off at a right angle from that which we have already traversed. The tunnel now again grows larger, and the *trottoir* wider, and the men tow the boats, walking on either side. We are now in the main drain, or *collecteur général*, leading from the Place de la Concorde into the Seine near Asnières, a distance of nearly three and a half miles. The tunnel at this point is 14 feet high by 18 feet wide, being a trifle larger than the Cloaca Maxima of Rome. This great *collecteur* receives the water from four smaller *collecteurs*, two each side of the Seine, and these in turn receive the water from the smaller drains. After a voyage of a few minutes in the boats we disembark, after handing our guides a well-earned

pourboire, and ascending a flight of stone steps return to daylight in the Place de la Madeleine.

Contrary to what might naturally be expected, no inconvenience whatever is felt from foul air or unpleasant smells, both of which are conspicuous by their absence. On this point, however, it must be remembered that the more offensive matters which we are occasioned to associate with the word sewage do not in Paris pass into the sewers at all, but are separately removed from the houses and converted into manure. The liquid in the sewers is therefore mainly household and surface water with a certain amount of dirt in solution, but not otherwise objectionable. The walls throughout the tunnels are of solid masonry, and generally speaking quite dry, though here and there a slight dripping from the crown of the arch tended to damage the hats of the party.

The system of sewers, of which we have thus explored a small section, has almost entirely come into existence during the last thirty years. In the middle ages the sewers of Paris were entirely open, running along the centre of the highway, with a little bridge or plank at intervals to enable persons to cross them. As a pendant to this pleasant state of things it may be recorded that as late as the time of Louis XIII. only one half of Paris was paved! The portion known as the Cité in olden times drained direct into the Seine, the left bank into a shallow stream called the Bièvre, and the right bank into the Ruisseau de Ménilmontant, which, after draining the heights of Ménilmontant, Belleville, and Montmartre, took its loathsome course from the spot where the Boulevard des Filles du Calvaire now commences, and found its way into the Seine at the spot now occupied by the Quai de Billy. For many centuries this brook formed the main sewer of Paris, gullies being dug to divert the sewage of outlying quarters in that direction. In 1374, Hugues Aubriot, Provost of Paris under Charles V., arched over the gully which carried the Montmartre sewage into the main sewer. His example was followed, at long distances of time, by other persons arching over other portions of the sewers. This improved matters externally, but the internal condition was something appalling. In 1633 five workmen, ordered to cleanse what was known as the Egout du Ponceau, were asphyxiated by a rush of sewer gas. A committee of doctors was appointed to inquire into the cause of so mysterious an occurrence, and reported that the poor men must have been killed by catching the eye of a basilisk (!) hidden somewhere in the sewer. In 1667 the Lieutenancy of Police was created, M. La Reynie being the first Lieutenant-General. New brooms proverbially sweep clean, and La Reynie seems to have been an unusually energetic broom. He made a bold attempt towards the paving of Paris, and arranged for an annual inspection of the sewers. Notwithstanding this praiseworthy arrangement, however, a few years later we find the Grand Egout choked alto-

gether, and those who had maintained that nothing could be worse than the state of things previously existing, were compelled to acknowledge their error.

Among the tributaries of the Grand Egout was at that period the Egout Gaillon, afterwards destined, under the name of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, to become one of the most fashionable streets of Paris. At that date it was an open sewer flanked by market gardens and marsh lands on either side, the exhalations from it being too pestilential to allow of the proximity of any human habitation.

In the reign of Louis XV. the Court was transferred from Versailles to Paris, and in consequence unusual efforts were made for the improvement of the city; but nothing effectual was done until 1740, when Michel Etienne Turgot, provost of the city and father of the celebrated minister of that name, undertook to reorganize the Grand Egout. He constructed a canal, five feet deep, and lined with freestone, to carry the sewage. It was arched over at the expense of the proprietors on either side, who received as compensation the additional surface thus gained. As an additional sanitary measure, Turgot constructed a spacious basin at the head of the sewer on the Boulevard des Filles du Calvaire, to collect the surface waters from the Belleville quarter. By means of the water thus accumulated he could flush the Grand Egout at pleasure—Louis XV. was himself present at the first flushing of the sewer, which was treated as a state ceremonial. This was a vast improvement, but the greater part of Paris still remained without any drainage at all. Things mended, but by very slow degrees. Up to the year 1800 the whole system of sewers extended to barely 16,000 yards. From 1800 to 1831 it more than doubled. In the next five years it was more than quadrupled, and successive extensions brought the total in 1854 to more than 150,000 yards. This, however, was barely one-third the length of the streets. In 1855 Baron Haussmann took the matter in hand, calling to his aid two eminent mining engineers, MM. Belgrand and Michal. In 1857 their plans were completed and approved, and in 1858 the work began which has made Paris, instead of one of the worst, the best drained of modern cities.

The form adopted is an upright oval, flattened at the bottom for greater facility in cleansing, and there are twelve standard sizes, according to the estimated quantity of water that the sewer may be required to carry. The estimate is liberal, for even the sewer communicating with a private house (the smallest size of the twelve) is nearly seven feet high by four wide. To prevent the possibility of the passage being used for improper purposes it is barred at the point where it passes the outer wall of the house by an open grating, only to be opened by two keys, one held by the proprietor of the house, the other by the municipal authorities.

The arrangements for cleansing are extremely ingenious. The bulk of the solid matter in the sewers consists of the washings from the roadways, which sink down in a gritty sediment to the bottom of the watercourses. In the larger *collecteurs*, or main sewers, the work is done by the boats we have described. In each of these is adapted what is called a *vanne*, or sluice gate, which may be raised or lowered at pleasure, and, when lowered, occupies the whole width of the channel, to which its shape is exactly adapted. In this *vanne* are three oval openings. The boat, with the *vanne* let down, is pushed onward by the force of the current, but its progress being very much slower than that of the current itself, a portion of the latter rushes with tremendous violence through the three openings, sweeping all solid matter remorselessly before it. In the smaller *collecteurs* a similar arrangement is adapted to the carriages we have mentioned. The smaller class of sewers are cleansed by manual labour. Where the sewer consists of a mere pipe, as in the case of the *collecteur* of the left bank, which has to cross the river, a different plan of cleansing is adapted, viz., the use of a large wooden ball of rather less diameter than the tube. This is introduced into the sewer and swept on by the current. As soon as it comes to a point where there is much solid matter in the sewer, it is driven against the upper surface of the pipe, and comes to a standstill. Meanwhile the current, gathering strength behind it, rushes with tremendous force below the ball, carrying away all sediment or solid matter, and leaving the course clear. Again the ball rushes on till it meets a fresh obstacle, when it is again driven to the top, and again washed clear.

Such are the Paris sewers—a splendid monument of bold design and perfect execution. In length they are nearly 700 miles, giving nearly a mile of sewer to every mile of roadway. They are clean, well ventilated, and accessible in every part, and they render practicable the admirable system of street-cleaning which does so much for the health and beauty of the city. Half-an-hour after the heaviest downpour of rain the streets of Paris are dry. There is no accumulation, as in London, of thick greasy mud. The pavements are bright and clean, and the water which has washed them has been absorbed by a thousand mouths, the ever-thirsty *bouches d'égout*, and is performing a further work of purification in the hidden channels below. Perhaps in the distant future, municipal reform may place like gifts within the reach of the long-suffering Londoner. Till then we must perforce retain the complaint of the sentimental traveller on our list of stock quotations, for “this matter” they must unquestionably “order better in France.”

ANGELO J. LEWIS.

THE TEA-PACKAGE TRADE.

A CURIOUS little trade has sprung up of late years which was quite unknown to our forefathers. It is called the tea-package trade. It is in part the outcome of the superannuation system, latterly introduced into the army. A number of gallant officers find themselves, while still in the prime of life, thrown on the world with a small pension and with nothing to do. Perhaps they have wives and children to support, in which case the pension is quite inadequate to their wants; but in any case, if they do not wish to settle down to a life of idleness, it is imperative that they should at once turn to some occupation ere the habit of working shall have forsaken them. But the profession of arms is one that unfits its votaries for almost any other pursuit. Every ex-militaire thinks at first of becoming governor of a gaol, or secretary to a club or a public company; but there are not gaols enough, nor companies, nor clubs enough, to absorb all the officers desiring such employment. Most of them therefore rush into the wine trade; and the residue into "tea," preferring that branch of it which is called the package trade.

At first sight this business seems an easy and delightful way of eking out a small income. It requires but little capital; indeed, there is one way of conducting it by which the necessity of paying down a single penny is avoided. This process is as follows:—Major Blank Cartridge persuades his friends to give him orders for tea; he then makes acquaintance with one of the large wholesale tea-dealers, say Messrs. Oolong and Co., and hands the orders to them to execute. They forward the tea as if from Blank Cartridge; and when payment arrives, addressed to him, he hands over the amount to them, less discount. This discount is his profit. As for Messrs. Oolong and Co., they are content with their usual profit, which is the difference between importers' price and wholesale market value. It will of course be understood that Major Blank Cartridge's discount has only been added on in order to be taken off. We have spoken of cases where the "officer and gentleman" is allowed to receive the payment direct from his customers, but that is not always so; unfortunately there are some of his class who do not inspire the confidence in the breasts of City merchants that is necessary for the obtaining of credit. Every man is allowed a three months' probation; and should his dealings have been "on the square" during that time, the credit is con-

tinued ; but in some cases it is found more prudent not to allow the customers' money to pass through his hands. Thereupon, Messrs. Oolong and Co. direct that payment shall be made to themselves, not to him ; and he turns their want of confidence in him to good account by explaining to his friends that his connection with the firm is so intimate that it comes to exactly the same thing into whosoever hands the money is paid. He hints, not darkly, at a partnership existing between him and them ; or at some huge debt of gratitude owing to him, which, he says, dates from his regimental days, when as adjutant he was able to put a large business in Messrs. Oolong's way, and thus is now able to obtain paradisaical tea from them at a merely nominal price. His plan has the great advantage of requiring no outlay on the major's part for an office, or furniture, or stock in trade.

Another way of going into the "package" line is to rent a garret in the City, so high up that you are quite safe from visitors. You are anxious to sell tea, and some one has told you that the only way to start a business is to advertise plentifully. So you spend all your capital in ordering life-size pictures of beautiful young ladies in swings, drinking tea, or of Indian Baboos in wonderful costumes, watering a curious-looking vegetable, supposed to represent a tea-plant. These striking advertisements delight your eye wherever you go, and as the demand for samples by post soon becomes quite lively, you flatter yourself the business is "going to do."

It is recorded that once an energetic broker, feeling it his duty as a family man to leave no stone unturned that might lead to business, climbed up the six storeys that led to one of these garrets. There he found a most gentlemanly-looking military man, with a small blotting-pad and a piece of paper in front of him. There was no sign of tea, or samples, or any such weaknesses lying about. The military gentleman informed the broker, in reply to his question, that he was not "at present" in want of tea. The broker heard no more of him until he saw his name in the *Gazette* for £7,000, all of which had been spent on advertisements and office rent.

But these two sorts of practitioners are not the genuine followers of the "package trade." They have no real knowledge of tea, and, therefore, cannot buy for themselves in Mincing Lane, but must trust to others. Thus none of the middleman's profits are avoided, but our gallant major stands towards the public in precisely the same relation as the retail grocer, much though he would dislike his friends to know it. If we wish to see the package business carried on successfully we must go to a small dark room in the City, on the first or second floor, rented by a man who has lived for years in India or China, in some mercantile capacity, during which time he has perforce acquired a thorough knowledge of tea. The room must have a good supply of water, and if

possible, a north aspect, that being, as artists well know, the only true light. The rent of this room is about £30; its furniture consists of an office table, a chair, a spittoon about four feet high, in shape something like an hour-glass, a tea-mixer, a set of Minton's small white tea pots and cups, a set of scales, and last, not least, a considerable number of chests and half-chests of tea, piled up to the ceiling, and occupying every available corner. When such a room as this greets the eye, it may be known that the business is genuine, and not a mere case of trading on the ignorance of the public. The owner buys the tea himself, at auction, in Mincing Lane, often obtaining very cheap little lots, owing to their being too small to attract the attention of great buyers, like Messrs. Oolong; he at once pays the deposit, then he proceeds to pay the duty (of 6d. per lb.) at the Custom House, has the tea brought into his office and repacks it in tins, in quantities suited to the probable demands of his customers. Before doing this, however, he has mixed two or three different qualities of tea, from different countries, in such proportions as his experience tells him will make a good "blend." The necessary capital required for starting such a business as this is supposed to be £300; office fittings and furniture costing about £30; tea and tea-duties £150; the rest is a working bank balance.

But let not any man suppose that when he has furnished his office and bought his tea, it is all plain sailing. On the contrary he will find that his troubles are only beginning. His friends advise him to try with all his might to secure the custom of large establishments, such as orphan or lunatic asylums, schools, barracks and hospitals; accordingly, when he hears that tenders are wanted for supplying such concerns, he sends in his tender with samples. Perhaps he is successful; but the competition for such contracts is so keen that he makes little if any profit out of the affair. He cannot understand how it is that other dealers compete thus keenly for what seems to be so trifling a gain, until at last one day the secret comes out. A broker tells him he is a fool to send the same tea as that of which the sample was accepted. "What you should do is this," says the broker; "send a sample of two-and-sixpenny; if it is accepted, then supply them with one-and-nine-penny; this will afford a good margin both for your profit and for you to present the steward with a half-chest of fine tea for himself, so that if he should notice any difference between the sample and the bulk of the tea, he will hold his tongue about it. Unless you do this, you will not be able to make any profit. The contractors all do it. In every large institution there is either a steward or a housekeeper, a messman or a secretary to be squared."

This advice is unfortunately too well founded, and should the tea merchant be too honest to follow it, he must expect that on the expiry of his contract it will not be renewed.

A rock to be avoided by the wary is the employment of a traveller. Many people are ready to recommend you to set up one, but as a rule the result is unsatisfactory. The first-rate traveller will not accept commissions from an infant business when he can command his own price from the long-established tea dealers. The second-rate travellers are not in any way trustworthy, and are as likely as not to come to you some morning and tell you that they cannot collect the money due to you—in other words that they have made bad debts for you to an amount that swallows up your whole profit for the year. Another danger is that the traveller may be a member of a long firm; in that case he pawns or sells your tea and pockets the money. You may have the consolation, after wasting much time in dancing attendance at police courts, of knowing that he is undergoing a term of penal servitude, but you cannot recover anything from him.

Having found large dealings a delusion and a snare, you devote yourself to the small but safe business of supplying your friends. And first you will be surprised to find how difficult it is to get them to give you an order. They may consider themselves not only great friends of yours, but of your father's before you; yet they will not change their tea dealer to save his son from the workhouse. Especially if they are professed philanthropists is this the case; they have been accustomed to expend so much sympathy on "the poor" that they have none left for members of their own class who are struggling in the face of misfortunes and obstacles of all kinds to earn an honest livelihood and keep their heads above water. Every one of this sort to whom you apply tells you either that her first cousin is in exactly the same line of business (which is, of course, a valid excuse, if true), or else that she has dealt so long with the nearest grocer that she cannot forsake him. She is, however, most anxious to help you, she says; ready to do anything for you, in short, except put herself out for you in the slightest degree. You cannot help suspecting that if you belonged to a lower class of the "unemployed," if you had a dirty face, a ragged coat, a breath redolent of alcohol, a vocabulary innocent of h's, and a burglarious expression of countenance her sympathy would at once take a more active form. We say "her" advisedly, for the ordering of tea for the household is a piece of patronage belonging exclusively to the lady of the house, and she is very jealous of any attempt to deprive her of it. Therefore it is of no use your looking up your school or college friends and expecting them to stand by you if they have married. They may, in consideration of "auld lang syne," order a box and present it to their wives; or they may buy a few pounds of tea from you and take it home, charging it to the housekeeping account; or they may even, if they be persuasive of tongue, coax the wives themselves into sending an order—for once. But, however cheerfully the present may have been accepted, or the tea that the

husband bought be paid for, or the order sent as he requested, the experiment will not be repeated.

You must make up your mind to the fact that only the ladies and not the men of your acquaintance will be your customers. And very troublesome customers they sometimes are, often from pure ignorance. There is a perfectly wonderful amount of ignorance in the public as regards tea. One lady, for instance, will ask you for mixed Indian and China tea in original packages. Where she supposes the tea is mixed and how she supposes that after being mixed it can still be in its original packages is a mystery. Another lady writes for a half-chest, and on receiving it sends it back again, carriage unpaid, explaining that she thought a chest contained ten pounds only, therefore a half-chest would contain five, and she is horrified at finding she has ordered 50 lbs. Another lady (Scotch), who apparently has not heard the Scotch proverb, "Many a little makes a mickle," and has no notion of the fact that the tea dealer's net profit comes to barely 2d. in the lb., calmly strikes off the pence, even when they amount to 11½d., from her bill, thus causing the poor vendor to be an actual loser of one half-penny by the transaction, since her "canny" order amounted in all to but 5 lbs.

Another, living in the most distant part of the United Kingdom, sends back the tea, carriage unpaid and tin broken, because she fancies it is not quite the same as last time—it having been, in fact, taken from precisely the same "lot."

Another deducts the price of the postal order which she incloses. Another sends postage stamps, one dozen short.

Another sends a few leaves of a tea that she likes, saying that she gave 3s. per lb. for it, but expects you to send her the same quality for 1s. 6d. She thinks she makes it all right with you by a judicious mixture of a little flattery and a hint at the possibility of her taking her custom elsewhere. "You are so clever in mixing," she writes, "that I am sure you can send me this tea at 1s. 6d. *I see delicious tea advertised at 2s. in all the newspapers.*"

Now the tea dealer in the "package" line can as a rule sell tea 6d. a lb. cheaper than the grocer, but to ask him to reduce his price 1s. 6d. per lb. is equivalent to asking him for a handsome present in money.

Sometimes a lady (generally Scotch) gets so many samples that the tea dealer strongly suspects her of supplying herself entirely in that way with tea. The samples she orders are of the finest teas. When the tea dealer shows signs of his patience being exhausted, she orders 5 lbs. of the commonest tea, which he has to send to the north of Scotland, carriage pre-paid. When she has consumed that quantity she again commences her demand for samples.

Some ladies judge of the tea sent them entirely by its price.

A lady of this stamp sent an order to a first-rate London tea merchant for "the best tea" he had. He sent her the best tea that had come to England that year, and charged her 3s. 6d. a lb. She sent it back saying she did not like it at all and she felt sure that the best tea could not be had at that price.

† "Don't know what the woman wants, I'm sure; this is the best tea in England. Here, Thompson!" said the merchant to his clerk, "put that tea into blue paper, charge it 4s. 6d. and send it back to the lady." This was done, and soon a letter arrived from her to the effect that the tea was "so delicious; infinitely superior to the other!" and so forth.

It is clear that knowledge of human nature is quite as necessary for the "package trade" as a knowledge of tea. Changing the colour of the paper is a plan that often gives entire satisfaction to a fanciful customer.

"Will you send me samples of the teas you have on hand?" is a sentence that makes the heart of the tea dealer sink when he sees it. He does not like to refuse, yet even if he only sends half a dozen small samples of 2 oz. each, it amounts to more than half a pound of tea; and then there is the postage, besides the paper and string and the time and trouble spent in packing; and, worst of all, he knows by experience that it will be all wasted; for the sending of samples scarcely ever leads to business. Tea keeps very badly in small quantities, especially when kept in paper; the lady probably lets the sample lie about the room for at least twenty-four hours, by which time it has lost its own flavour and imbibed that of the paper it is wrapped in; and when she finally makes tea from it, ten to one but she uses lukewarm water, or water that has been boiling so long that all the life and soul is gone out of it. For it is a fact not generally known, but a most important one for the making of tea, that boiling water loses its virtue the longer it is kept on the fire. The proof of this may easily be seen. If fresh cold water be used, the first time it comes to the boil it will lift the lid of the kettle and conduct itself altogether in an uproarious manner, boiling over and trying to put out the fire; it is when in this state that it is good for making tea. If you put it on the fire again, you will find you cannot get it to boil over a second time, still less a third; and if you make tea, as servants often do, with water that has been simmering for hours, your tea will be wretched stuff not fit to drink.

But we are wandering a little from the "package trade." It only remains to be said that it is by no means a bed of roses for a man who has seen better days, and if these few remarks should have the effect of creating a little sympathy for his lot among the fairer portion of the human race, and of inducing some of them to be a little more generous, not to say just, in their dealings with him, they will not have been written in vain.

It must not, however, be imagined that all ladies are like the specimens we have mentioned. If they were the tea-package dealer might shut up his office. No! there are many, fortunately, whose sympathies are not confined to roughs and ne'er-do-weels, and who do not see any reason for treating a personal friend worse than they would dare to treat an ordinary grocer. There are ladies, and many of them, too, who are just as reasonable and as liberal-minded as men; as intelligent, more sympathetic, and as scrupulous in paying every farthing of their just debts. The proof that there are many of them lies in the fact of the existence of the tea-package trade at all. It takes about 400 of these superior customers to produce an income of £100 a year; so that when we consider how many merchants are engaged in it and that some of them are known to be making five and even six hundred a year, it becomes obvious that there must be some millions of honest and business-like women among the upper classes of this country. With which consoling reflection we will conclude.

“AUF DER MENSUR.”

HAVE you ever been on the Rhine? If you are an Englishman, you probably know the Rhine from Schaffhausen to the North Sea far better than most Germans. If not, take my advice and go as soon as you can. But if you have stayed in a certain famous university town not a hundred miles from the banks of the Rhine you have doubtless marvelled at the strange appearance of many of the students, the coloured *Mütze* upon their heads surmounting square good-humoured faces, which were so seamed across and across with sword-cuts that it was hard to tell where the smile ended and the scars began. Or perhaps you have seen, as you sipped your coffee in a restaurant (Lord! what coffee!) some wounded hero, his head swathed in bandages and a strip of court-plaster across his nose, the centre of a group of admirers, who are carrying on at the top of their voices a conversation in which the words *paruken*, *Hieb*, *schlagen* play an ominous and significant part. But though its effects are pretty obvious, the duel itself is seldom witnessed by strangers, for duelling, though winked at in practice, is generally forbidden in theory; consequently a certain semblance of secrecy has to be kept up.

Now, in common with most of my countrymen, I *did* want to see a duel before leaving the Fatherland, and it was therefore

with some pardonable gratification that, coming home to my rooms, I found a note on my table from a student friend: "I will call you to-morrow"—(alas! to-morrow had already merged into to-day!)"—"at five o'clock; there will be six duels, and R. is going to fight." Now R. was a particular friend of mine, and, as report went, was the champion hewer of heads and drawer of blood in the university. Accordingly, when after about two hours' sleep I was awakened by a stern *aufstehen*, I turned out readily enough, eager for the fray, and joined the group of *Burschen* awaiting me in the street below. As we passed along through the silent streets we were joined by several more batches of students, all bound for the same quiet spot on the wooded hills. That sleepy-eyed policeman who stands blinking at us in the morning sun—he knows, good easy man, what is afoot; but, bless you! boys will be boys, and if the Kaiser and Prince Bismarck don't mind, why should a poor, simple *Schutzmänn* trouble his head about the matter?

But we are terribly hungry, and not a baker's shop is yet open. Never mind, we can break our fast at the next village; and, sure enough, as we plod up the village street, there is a baker opening his shop, and just opposite a sausage-vendor festooning his window with *Wurst* of all kinds. Fresh rolls and *Leber-Wurst*—yes, and he *has* a bottle of cognac. Heaven be praised! for I had an uneasy feeling that, for a novice at least, a duel, like a strong cigar, was better taken *after* breakfast.

"Lots of blood let this morning," said a warlike Teuton as he stuffed his mouth full of sausage. I shuddered, and took another sip of cognac.

As we proceeded on our way I found this murderous youth walking by my side.

"Have you ever fought a duel?" asked I innocently.

"*Ach Gott! ja*," said he; "I am going to fight one this morning."

What was he going to fight about?

Well, one night, as he was sitting quietly in a *café*, a couple of students entered, "beautifully drunk" (so he put it). They naturally excited some attention, which was of course resented. After a few moments one of them staggered up to my companion and said, "You have stared at me—may I request your card?" That was all. What a curious thing this sense of honour is!

"But what would an Oxford undergraduate do if a stranger stared at him rudely?" asked my companion.

I was vainly trying to deprecate his politely disguised contempt at hearing that the undergraduate would not thirst for the stranger's blood, when the sound of voices and the clink of glasses warned us that we were close upon the scene of action.

A few steps out of the path brought us to a small clearing in the wood, where it was evident that something uncommon was

going on. At either end of the clearing a large group of students was gathered, with here and there an officer—some standing, some lying on the turf, most of them with the inevitable and omnipresent glass of beer by their side. As soon think of playing “Hamlet” with the Prince of Denmark left out as crack a joke with a friend or cross swords with an enemy without a beer-barrel in the midst!

As we were exchanging greetings with an acquaintance at one end of the inclosure (the group at the farther end being composed of members of the opposing *Verbindung*), we had time to look about us at the curious scene.

In the background, before a huge portmanteau filled with swords, gauntlets, and other implements of war, knelt the factotum of the *Verbindung*, who seemed as much at home in deeds of blood as of beer. Close by was the doctor, with one of those mysterious cases of evil-looking instruments, his sleeves tucked up, and a blue apron round his waist. How like a butcher he looked!

The first duel was just over, but, as one of the spectators told me, it was not worth seeing—no blood to speak of; the duel had been suspended by the doctor, on account of one of the men having a weak heart. Just then one of the late combatants came up to us; he had only one piece of sticking-plaster across his nose, and was quieting his nerves with a pipe. He looked pleased that it was over, much more pleased than the man who was now preparing for the slaughter. The latter, under the hands of various attendants, was gradually undergoing a marvellous transformation. Having stripped to the waist, he was first enveloped in a large white gaberdine. Next his throat was protected by bands of thick cloth, wound tightly round and round, until it seemed well-nigh impossible for him to move his head. The front of his body was then covered with what looked very like a dropsical cricket pad on a large scale, extending from the chest to the knees. The sword arm, from the wrist to the shoulder, was then padded and bandaged to three times its natural size, and the hand guarded by a thick leathern gauntlet. Lastly, a pair of spectacles, rimmed with metal, protected the eyes. The *Schläger*, or duelling sword, is then placed in his hand—a nasty-looking weapon about a yard and a quarter in length, quite blunt but for about ten inches at the end, where it is double-edged and as sharp as a razor. Thus accoutred, our hero, being the challenging party, walks slowly forward to the middle of the ground, his right arm, which must be terribly heavy, supported by the *Tuchs*, or junior freshman of the *Verbindung*, and surrounded by his comrades and admirers.

Meanwhile the same elaborate preparations have been going on at the other end of the ground, and in a few moments the men are standing opposite each other, the one small and lithe, the

other a stout heavy man, with the head and neck of a bull. Each man has his second—also partially protected by padding—who stands close by him on the left, with a blunt sword in his hand. Between the two, but at a safe distance, stands the umpire. Just behind is an attendant with a basin of water, a sponge, and a chair, while the doctors hover round the group like vultures scenting slaughter from afar. The buzz of conversation in the ring is immediately hushed as the umpire calls "*Silentium, zur Mensur!*" and announces that two members of such and such *Verbindungen* will fight for fifteen minutes. Then one of the seconds gives the word to cross swords; and as the two figures in the middle stand with right arms high in the air and swords crossed, the other second cries "*Los!*" and off they go. The strokes, coming entirely from the wrist, rain down so rapidly that it is almost impossible for an inexperienced eye to follow them, but as each one is guarded one hears the sharp thwack of the sword as it descends harmless on some part of the padding of the shoulder or throat. Suddenly a small tuft of hair seems to spring from the big man's head. "Halt!" cries his opponent's second. The swords are instantly struck up by the seconds, and the umpire steps up to examine the head. It was a close shave, but the skin is whole, so they start again. The men are now getting terribly excited. Breathless and panting they slash away at each other; and it is no easy matter for the seconds to stop them at the word "halt." Each round lasts on an average about ten seconds, for the men are stopped on the slightest suspicion of a wound; and if blood is found the umpire scores the point in his note-book.

At the end of ten minutes neither is seriously cut, although the faces of both are nearly covered with blood from numerous scratches and small cuts. But at last the little man's sword finds its way round to his adversary's left ear. In a moment the word "halt" is given, and the former brings his sword back to the first position. But the other, apparently carried away by rage and excitement, brings his sword with all his force across the little fellow's head, slicing off a piece of the scalp about two inches long and one broad, and sending it flying over our heads.

The stroke was received without the movement of a muscle; but the little man had to be carried off for repairs, and the duel was ended. His opponent was next morning challenged by six of the wounded man's friends for his breach of the laws of duelling.

I may also mention that the missing piece was found after some search, and restored to its owner, after having been handed round for inspection. This is why I am so particular as to its size.

While the wounded hero was sitting and smoking his long pipe under the doctor's hands, the two next combatants were getting themselves trussed for the slaughter. It was indeed hard to

recognize in the stuffed and padded figure which stood practising sword-cuts in the air my friend R., who, by-the-bye, looked far more like a mild-eyed curate of High Church tendencies than the most inveterate *Paucker* on the Rhine. Curiously enough, he had not a scar upon his face.

During the first few minutes of the duel "halt" is cried several times, but nothing comes of it. The strokes are of terrific force, for both men, from constant practice, have wrists of steel; but every blow is completely guarded, and turned off on to the hilt or shoulder-padding. At last the curate's sword just skims the cheek of his adversary, and seems to draw across it with its razor edge a thin threadlike line, which in an instant has broadened out into a terrible gash.

His reverence has drawn the first blood. At the end of ten minutes he has repeated the operation four times. The face, neck, and gaberdine of the other are covered with blood, and his supporters at every interval are freshening him up with sponges. Our ecclesiastical friend has only two slight scratches on his forehead. The wounded man is now, of course, fighting against tremendous odds, but nevertheless he pegs gamely on, until suddenly he misses his guard completely, and the whole side of his cheek is laid open from the upper lip to the ear, and two teeth are cut clean asunder. This, of course, disabled him, and the doctor stepped in and stopped the duel; but before separating the two combatants shook hands with the heartiest goodwill, and I doubt not will have another turn before the year is out. But it was not the least remarkable part of the spectacle to see the beaten man, while the doctor sewed, patched, tied, and bandaged him up, sitting quietly in his chair without a murmur or a sigh, as nonchalant and unmoved as though he were having his hair cut.

Such was the "quiet and gentle passage of arms" which took place one summer's morning in the year of grace eighteen hundred and eighty-six.

C. H. R.

THE SOMMERCOMBE VICAR.

By ANNETTE CALTHROP.

MARGARET GRAYSON had attained the age of seventeen years, and had, in popular phrase, finished her education. It was with no small exultation that she bade good-bye to school-life in London and returned to the little North Devonshire village of Sommercombe, where her father, who was a widower, and over whose household she expected to preside as mistress, had for many years been vicar. Margaret was an only child; the principal inmates of the vicarage, her father and her cousin Ben—an orphan, who had shared her home as a child, and whose college expenses were now defrayed by the vicar—had all her life conspired to spoil her.

It was a lovely summer evening when, after a long drive in a light cart lent for the occasion by Reuben Knight, churchwarden and principal farmer of her father's parish, Maggie arrived at Sommercombe, a village which lies, in the midst of enchanting scenery, on the edge of heathery moorland, and at the summit of a high rock, from whence a zigzag path leads to a shingle beach and a wide expanse of grey sea. Margaret sprang to her feet before a little vicarage with a rustic porch, grey walls smothered in creepers, lattice windows, and a thatched roof. Deborah, the one servant whom the vicarage boasted, a bustling, capable woman, but of a somewhat pugnacious character, stood in the porch to receive her young mistress.

"Where's father?" asked Margaret, rather a blank look crossing her face as she returned Deborah's greeting.

"Lor', but you're growed!" cried the old servant, eyeing the girl with shrewd, critical eyes.

Maggie was a tall, erect maiden, with a bright wilful face, flashing dark eyes, a pouting mouth, and a mass of dark hair.

"Where's father?" repeated the girl in a voice whose impatient accents revealed the presence of an imperious temper. She pushed past Deborah into a dining-room—a small, low room with old-fashioned mahogany furniture and well-filled bookshelves—where a meal for one person was set out on a table near an open window.

"Your pa's dining at the hall," responded Deborah snappishly. "He left his love for you, Miss Maggie," she added after a pause.

"It's strange that father should be out on my first evening at home!"

Maggie tossed her pretty head in dudgeon. But it was not till her luggage had been lifted from the light cart and deposited upstairs, till she had removed her outdoor gear, and taken her seat beside the supper-table, that the girl discovered the nature of a possible grievance to herself, involved in her father's absence from home.

"There's a young lady, a Miss Sinclair, a niece of her ladyship's, staying at the hall," said Deborah as she removed the cover from a dish of mutton cutlets. "Your pa is often there nowadays. People do say as he is courting Miss Sinclair, and as he means to make her your new ma."

Down went Maggie's knife and fork; the girl stared at Deborah in speechless, indignant surprise.

"I ain't a-going to stop in this house, not with no Miss Sinclairs," announced the servant loftily as she left the room.

The interest of Deborah's second announcement paled before that of its predecessor. All the pleasure of Maggie's homecoming had been clouded in a moment. The prospect of a step-mother invading her domain, and perhaps usurping control over herself, was hateful as it was absorbing. Maggie was the last person to submit without violent protest to any newly imposed authority. Hot tears came to the girl's eyes; she dashed them angrily away.

"I wish that Ben were at home!" she exclaimed passionately.

Maggie was idolized by her cousin Ben; his sympathy would certainly have been at her service at this crisis in her life.

"A thousand welcomes home!"

A tall clergyman, with a plain, sallow face, grey eyes, reddish hair, and a long red beard, stood in the doorway. He wore ill-cut clerical clothes, and thick, clumsy, country-made boots.

"How do you do, Mr. Wentworth?"

The Reverend Mark Wentworth had been for more than ten years curate to Mr. Grayson. All the hardest and driest clerical work of the parish fell to his share; he executed it, not only with fidelity, but with a zest which won the frank recognition of the vicar, a warm-hearted impulsive man, popular alike in society and in the pulpit, but an avowed lover of his own ease.

The curate took Maggie's hand, and looked into her face; it was the dearest face in all the world for him.

"What's the matter?" he asked with a kind smile.

But when, in response to his inquiry, Maggie burst into a storm of counter-questions on the theme engrossing her thoughts, Wentworth could only confirm Deborah's statement that Grayson was often at Sommercombe Hall, where a certain Miss Sinclair was visiting her aunt, Lady Denham, and that the gossips of the

place prophesied an impending marriage between the young lady and the vicar.

"Cheer up, Maggie," Wentworth added encouragingly. "Perhaps there's no truth in the prophecy after all."

The curate tried to lead the conversation into other channels; he talked of the girl's school in London, of her cousin Ben, who was shortly expected with a college friend in Sommercombe, of hay harvest, of a new harmonium in the church, of this, that, and the other topic foreign to the one broached by Deborah.

Maggie made only scant response.

After a while Mr. Wentworth took his leave. Soon afterwards a quick step was heard on the garden path; a pleasant voice called, "Where is my darling?" and a handsome, middle-aged man, with a bland face, regular features, blue eyes, a weak mouth, and brown hair unmixed with grey, appeared upon the scene.

Maggie's reception of her father was lacking in enthusiasm, but her pride forbade question or remonstrance concerning his matrimonial aspirations. Mr. Grayson put down her want of effusion to fatigue, and she presently retired to bed.

The next morning Maggie was up and out betimes. But for the misgiving at her heart, it would have been unmixed happiness for her to wander once more, after her experience of the close, crowded streets of London, out on the moor, with the breath upon it of heather and gorse; to hear the murmur of the sea upon the stones; to stroll through the picturesque, irregular village street and through the old churchyard, where the tall grass with its wealth of buttercups waved in the summer breeze.

"Miss Maggie's growed a raal beauty, ain't her?" said Mrs. Vellacott, proprietress of the "Rising Sun" inn, to her neighbour, Mrs. Groves, the curate's landlady and the carrier's wife, as the two women stood in their doorway to watch the "parson's" daughter as she passed, in her grey cotton dress and shady hat, with a bunch of woodruff at her breast, towards the vicarage and stopped to exchange greetings with Harry the postman at the garden gate.

Mrs. Groves was of a lugubrious turn of mind; she shook her head meaningly. "Her has too bright a colour, for all the world like her mother's; and that's a churchyard cough of hers—I heard it," she said in a tone of foreboding.

Maggie's mother, to whom Mrs. Groves made such ominous reference, had died many years before in consumption. Maggie herself had, as a young child, shown some signs of inheriting a consumptive tendency, but she had become stronger with advancing years, and the fears at present entertained for her health were few and far between.

Before many days had passed the vicar's daughter was introduced to Miss Sinclair, a tall, elegant young lady, with stately

manners, who received her with a graciousness which was by no means reciprocated.

Sir Charles and Lady Denham, Miss Sinclair's host and hostess, were the great people of the neighbourhood, and lived at Sommercombe Hall, an old grey house standing in a small park a mile out of the village. When Maggie had been a week in Devonshire, she and her father were guests at a dinner-party at the hall. The vicar's place at table was next Miss Sinclair; his conversation with that lady was sustained with so much animation and such evident relish that Maggie, seated opposite with Mark Wentworth, was furiously angry. Mark could hardly elicit a word from her; he took to watching in silence her expressive face, with its changing colour and flashing dark eyes.

The next morning, before the vicarage breakfast was over, Maggie received a note from Lady Denham, asking her and her father to join the hall party in a picnic to Woody Kerswell, a fishing village, far famed for its picturesque beauty.

"I shan't go," said Maggie viciously, as she handed the invitation to her father.

Mr. Grayson glanced through the note.

"You won't go, little lady? Why not?" he asked gaily. He was accustomed to displays of his daughter's wilfulness—was accustomed to defer to her decrees.

"I don't wish to go. I—I—don't like Miss Sinclair. She tries—to—to patronize me, and I hate patronage."

The vicar laughed. "Well, please yourself, dearie," he said.

In another half-hour he set out for the hall, swinging a stick, humming a tune, and devising an excuse to Lady Denham for the non-appearance of his daughter.

Maggie stood at the open window looking over the vicarage garden. She pulled absently towards her an intrusive spray of ivy which had pushed its way through the window.

"I won't stay at home, if father marries Miss Sinclair—I won't," said Maggie to herself, with huge vengeful emphasis.

There came a touch on her arm; turning, she saw Mark Wentworth.

"Mr. Wentworth! How glad I am to see you! I badly want some one to talk to me this morning. I am miserable."

"You will have Ben and his friend to talk to you to-morrow," returned the curate as he took his place on the window-seat beside Maggie. "I have promised your father to meet them at Barnstaple to-morrow, in Reuben Knight's cart."

Maggie tore her ivy leaves into minute pieces and tossed the fragments to the ground. "I am angry with father," she said furiously; "and—and," with a fresh sense of injury, "I hate Miss Sinclair."

"Hush, child. I must not hear a word against your father."

"At any rate, I won't stay at home if——" Maggie's lip quivered.

Mark caught the girl's hands impulsively in his own; he drew her towards him. "Come to *my* home, dear," he whispered, bending his head close to hers, while a look of tender longing deepened in his grey eyes. "I am a dull, awkward fellow, many years older than yourself, but I would devote my life to make you happy. I have loved you very dearly as a child, I love you very dearly as a woman. Will you be my wife?"

"Wife!" With a struggle Maggie escaped from Mark's grasp. She stood gazing up at him with wide-open, alarmed eyes.

"I have taken you by surprise. Do not answer me at once. Think over what I say," urged Mark, regaining one of the tiny hands.

Maggie was utterly taken by surprise. The curate had been one of the favourite grown-up friends of her childhood, but she had not, as yet, left that childish time far behind her, and Mark Wentworth had never once appeared to her in the light of a possible husband.

"Think over what I say." Mark's pleading was impetuously renewed. One hardly-won result of that pleading was that when the vicar returned from Woody Kerswell, he was assailed with an importunate request for the paternal consent to Maggie's engagement to Mark Wentworth. Mr. Grayson had no sufficient objection to offer to the curate's suit, but he stipulated that on account of the girl's extreme youth there should be no thought of marriage for some time to come.

Mark consented with fairly good grace to the vicar's condition. He was happy enough to be Maggie's accepted lover on any terms. Every moment of his leisure next day he spent at the vicarage; and when he left Maggie in the afternoon to meet Ben and his friend at Barnstaple, he was as profuse in farewells and in fruitless petitions for kisses as if he were starting on a long journey.

Ben Grayson was a student of Trinity College, Cambridge; the career awaiting him was that of a clergyman. He was a plain, fair-complexioned, fair-haired, muscular young man, of some two and twenty years of age. His mental capabilities, though respectable, were not brilliant, and he looked upon himself as stupid; his honesty and courage and fidelity were great as was his humility. Will Dykes, who was to spend part of long vacation in Sommercombe, was a contrast to his friend Ben in many respects. Young Dykes was a handsome fellow, with a tall figure, a dark complexion, curling brown hair, and mischievous brown eyes. His demeanour was often one of almost insolent indifference and indolence, but he could assume fascinating manners at will, and had won considerable reputation as a conversationalist.

Ben introduced Dykes with some pride to Wentworth at the Barnstaple station. "How is Madge? Has she lost that

tiresome cough of hers?" the young man asked as he drove off, with Wentworth and Dykes, in the direction of Sommercombe. Ben shared Mrs. Groves' solicitude, though not her dismal apprehensions, concerning Maggie's health.

"Madge is quite well." A significant look came into Mark's face; the presence of a stranger checked the utterance of an important communication which rose to his lips.

"Pretty country," remarked Dykes carelessly, as he lighted a cigar and glanced along the road, which ran like a long, white thread midway along a wooded hill, with a babbling stream below, and clustering firs and larches overhead.

"Pretty—it's beautiful," corrected Mark with some show of hostility.

Ben sang at the top of his fresh young voice, not always true to tune. He was delighted to be again in Devonshire; he loved his county and his home, loved a quiet country life and unsophisticated country folk. He had a big, soft, loving heart, and was not ashamed to confess to occasional fits of homesickness during his school and college life.

On went the cart through shady lanes, where ragged robbin and cockles and blue bells and wild geranium and red and yellow pimpernels and the white flowers of the wild garlic peeped out from banks of fern and flowering grass. The travellers mounted steep hills and descended into green valleys, passing through hamlets—where Ben waved eager salutations to sundry home-plodding labourers whom he knew by sight—and across stretches of lonely moorland. Here and there on the hills a solitary farmhouse would be seen; patches of fallow land shone out red against the pastures, dotted with sheep. The cry of the corn-crake was heard amid the more musical notes of singing birds.

At length Sommercombe ridge, with the village and the grey old church tower all aglow with sunshine, came in sight. With a great shout Ben sprang to the ground, when he saw Maggie standing in a white dress and a big straw hat at the vicarage gate.

"It *is* just fine to see you again, Madge," he said in a breathless voice as he laid a hand on her shoulder and looked down into her face.

Mark Wentworth passed the evening at the vicarage. He did not find the occasion propitious for exclusive communication with Madge, who had much to say to Ben, and was coquettishly determined to make a favourable impression on the stranger guest. When the curate took leave for the night, Ben walked with him to his lodging at Mrs. Groves—a low, white-washed cottage standing in a narrow strip of garden. The two men made their way to a sitting-room in the front of the house. It was a small room with rosewood furniture, a corner cupboard,

and a big writing-table—the latter strewn with books and pamphlets. Some coloured prints, selected by Mrs. Groves without much regard to artistic excellence, adorned the walls; among them hung an illuminated text which had been painted for Mark by a distant relative named Amy Battiscombe; Ben's eye fell on the words: "Quit you like men; be strong."

"I say," began Mark suddenly, "I've a piece of news for you."

"Out with it, then; fire away." Ben spoke half absently. He stood by an open lattice window; it was a lovely moonlight night, and he revelled in the familiar scenery without.

"Can you guess the news?"

"No, I can't guess."

"It concerns Madge."

"Madge!" Ben turned round, all attention in a moment. A swift presentiment of coming evil crept over him with a sense of chill.

"Madge has promised to be my wife."

"Your wife!" The young man turned again to the window a face which had become as white as death.

"I have cared for Madge always; I care for her more than I can ever hope to tell you."

No answer. Ben's face was still turned to the moonlight. He saw nothing; a mist was before his eyes. "It's all over," he murmured.

"Won't you congratulate me, Ben? Aren't you glad to hear of my happiness?"

All at once the words which he had just read—"Quit you like men; be strong"—seemed to sound in Ben's ear. He raised his head. "Yes, I am glad," he said in a steady voice, from which the youthful ring had gone, "since you and Madge are glad. You are worthy of Madge, Wentworth, but—but—I didn't know that you loved her."

It was with a sense of relief that Ben found himself at length in the open air. He walked home very slowly, his eyes upon the ground, "It's all over," he said again.

Only a boy's dream was over—only a wild dream of an impossible future. What the waking cost to the reality of life, only the dreamer knew.

The days went on. The three young people of the vicarage spent most of their time out of doors. They would take their midday meal with them, and would wander for miles along the moors or over the rocks. Often they would clamber down steep, jagged, rocky staircases to caves on the shore; the sea gulls flew over their heads; the fishing-boats passed gaily by; the boom of the waves was in their ears. Wentworth would join the party when leisure presented itself, but he found Maggie unwilling to sustain in orthodox fashion the character of an affianced lover. "I want to talk to Ben and to Mr. Dykes now," she would say

pettishly, when Mark tried to monopolize her attention. "I have you always, remember, and they are here only for a time."

"Isn't it a bit of a shame," remarked Dykes one day to Ben, "that your cousin should be bound to such a tiresome fellow as that curate of your uncle? Miss Grayson is downright beautiful; she is the most beautiful girl that I have ever seen—there!"

"Is Wentworth tiresome?" returned Ben. "At any rate I know," he went on with stout loyalty, "that he is a capital fellow, and as true as steel."

Sommercombe slowly awoke to the truth of the stranger's verdict on Maggie. The vicar's daughter had grown very beautiful; she was unquestionably the belle of the neighbourhood.

As for the stranger himself, he was voted an acquisition to local society—a good-looking, well-informed fellow, with plenty to say for himself. Wentworth did not share the general opinion. "Dykes is a self-sufficient coxcomb," he said to Ben, who looked surprised and pained at the curate's singular want of appreciation of his friend.

Ben read and studied hard. He looked up all his old friends; he tasted Mrs. Vellacott's cider, and sat for a long time over the peat fire in her kitchen; he visited Harry Hackett the postman, and smoked a friendly pipe with Reuben Knight the churchwarden; he had a pleasant word and a pleasant smile for every one; a supreme hope had gone out of his life, but he was no less kind and sympathetic, though he was quieter and more self-contained than of old. "I shall be glad to go back to Cambridge. Work is the best thing—the very best thing—for me," he would say to himself. "I could almost find it in my heart to be glad that I am stupid, since work is the more necessary if I am to take a respectable degree."

To Cambridge Ben returned, accompanied by Will Dykes. It was remarked by old friends that Grayson had changed; he seemed to have passed suddenly from the boy to the man.

Meanwhile in late autumn an event of some importance occurred in Sommercombe. A good living—that of Pagwell St. Peter—which had become vacant in Worcestershire, was offered to Mark Wentworth by its patron Mr. Battiscombe, who was a distant relative of his own. A visit to Mr. Battiscombe's house and an inspection of the parish resulted in the curate's acceptance of the offer. Mark pleaded hard with Maggie to become his wife before his assumption of the duties of a new benefice, but the girl energetically resisted the appeal. She would not consent to marry before summer at earliest.

One winter's evening, near Christmas time, Mr. Grayson was dining at the hall, where Miss Sinclair still remained, and Maggie, after an interview with Mark, who had been very voluble on the subject of his new parish and church, sat on a low chair by the fire in the drawing-room, awaiting her father's return. A thoughtful

look was on her face as she stared down, her elbows on her knees, into the red coals. On her lap was a closely written letter; the postmark on the envelope was Cambridge, and the handwriting was that of a man, though not that of her cousin Ben.

Maggie crushed the letter hurriedly into her pocket when at last her father's step was heard without.

The vicar came in, bringing a breath of frosty air with him. He was in a conversational mood, and he talked pleasantly to his daughter of the events of the evening.

"A Major Collins is staying at the hall," he said, as he held out his hands to the blaze. "We discovered that he and I were together at Eton. It strikes me," an amused twinkle came into Grayson's blue eyes, "that Miss Sinclair will be Collins' wife one of these fine days."

"Miss Sinclair!" Maggie's hands fell in her lap. She stared up into her father's face; her colour came and went. "I thought that you——" She broke off.

"Oh, I may be mistaken," said Grayson carelessly, as he pushed a protruding lump of coal into the grate with his foot. "But Collins seemed very devoted. What?—are you off to bed already, dearie? Well—good-night. Pleasant dreams to my Maggie."

Sommercombe gossip was groundless after all. The vicar was a desperate flirt; he delighted in the society of ladies, delighted to worship at the shrine of beauty, to prove his skill in the composition of neatly turned compliments, but at the bottom of his heart he was true to the memory of the wife of his youth; he had never seen any one whom he held worthy to fill the vacant place in his home and heart.

Maggie escaped to her own room. She threw open the window, and looked out on the cold dark night. "If I had only known before Mark spoke to me what father meant! If I had only known," she cried.

There was a wail in her voice, and her head sank wearily on her clasped hands.

* * * * *

It was summer-time again. The apple orchards around the village of Pagwell, in Worcestershire, were one sheen of blossom. The birds sang gaily, the sky was blue and cloudless.

Ben Grayson was passing late one afternoon along the dusty road which led from Pagwell railway station through the village to a fine old Norman church and a low, rambling, red brick rectory. He wore clerical attire, having been ordained deacon on Trinity Sunday, after taking—to his own surprise and that of his friends—an exceptionally good degree. Ben looked older and graver than when we last saw him; an absorbed look was on his face to-day. He crossed a rustic bridge, and looked down over

Pagwell brook and over a fine old ivy-covered house standing in a large garden shaded by quaint old yews. The house and garden belonged to the Pagwell squire, Mr. Battiscombe; Ben had no eyes for their beauty now. He hurried on with bent head, met without conscious observation Amy Battiscombe, the squire's daughter, who was passing through the village, basket on arm; and presently he was standing in the study of Mark Wentworth's rectory, a pleasant room with a bay window overlooking an old-fashioned garden and a trimly kept lawn.

In a couple of days' time would come the day fixed for Mark's wedding with Madge; the bridegroom elect was to start on the morrow for Sommercombe, and Ben's errand in Pagwell was to stop the rector's journey.

Momentous tidings had come to Sommercombe, and had been circulated through the village with the morning's letters. Madge Grayson had surreptitiously left her home. In a letter addressed to her father she confessed that she had gone to London, and that before the written words met the reader's eye she would be married to Will Dykes. In a few passionate words, ill put together, the girl declared that her action had been suddenly resolved upon, but that her engagement had long been irksome to her, though she had weakly shrunk from inflicting pain on Mark by asking her freedom at his hands. All at once, before it was too late, she had awoke to the fact that the fulfilment of her engagement was impossible. Her heart was not Mark's; it was given to Will. Madge wrote that she had never been worthy of Mark—never worthy his love and his generous trust. She hoped that in time he would forget her, and that he would one day find in the affection of a woman far worthier than herself solace for her own unfaithfulness.

The news of Maggie's elopement created the utmost consternation in Sommercombe. Denunciations of Will Dykes' treachery were unstinted; condemnation of "Miss Maggie" herself was less loud and less persistent. "Her hadn't no mother to look after her," said Deborah the pugnacious, her pugnacity melting in a shower of tears.

Mr. Grayson went off to London, and despatched Ben to Pagwell to break the news to Mark. Half stunned himself by the sadness and suddenness of the news, the young man did not shirk—it was never his habit to shirk—the task assigned him.

How the interview passed with Mark, how stormy was the grief of the strong man, to whom happiness had seemed so near, and from whom it had been so suddenly wrenched, Ben could not afterwards with any accuracy recall. At length Mark had burst into passionate invective against Ben himself. It was Ben, he said, who had brought Dykes to Sommercombe, who had admitted a scoundrel into the society of Madge and her friends.

Ben never resented the imputation against himself—never

once. A great pity, but no particle of anger, was in his heart as he listened. It did not occur to him to defend himself. "I wish that I could find words to comfort you, Wentworth," he said, laying his hand timidly on Mark's arm. "As for myself, this news has been a shock to me too. You see, I cared very much for Dykes, and—and," the brave voice faltered, "for Madge. It hurts me, too, to think of them as false."

"Hurts *you*!" Wentworth shook off the hand which rested on his arm. He turned away with a bitter laugh. "In a year's time you will have forgotten the events of to-day; to me they bring a life-long sorrow."

* * * * *

Five years had passed. It was summer-time again. Once more Ben stood in the study of Pagwell rectory, waiting for Mark Wentworth. He had not seen the rector since their sad interview five years ago.

Ben Grayson was vicar of Sommercombe. His uncle had gained clerical preferment, and was dean of a cathedral town, where Major Collins and his wife—once Miss Sinclair—held a prominent place among his friends.

Madge's marriage had not been an eminently successful one. Will Dykes' father, a merchant of colossal fortune, had set his heart on his son's marriage with an heiress of his acquaintance; the old man was displeased by his son's independent action, and refused the young people any monetary allowance. Will had not been brought up to follow any profession; he found it difficult to earn a livelihood, and he and his wife had hitherto been supported by Mr. Grayson. They led a wandering life, and a letter which Ben had that morning received from Maggie was dated from a mountain inn in Switzerland.

Maggie had not, she wrote, been well lately. Her old enemy, a cough, troubled her again. There was not anything serious the matter, but she had grown weak and fanciful of late. Her thoughts often wandered to old days, to her childhood—to Mark. Did Ben think that Mark had forgiven her? Maggie often longed to see him again, to hear from his own lips that he was happy. Would Ben persuade Mark to pay her and Will a visit at the Bel Alp? If her cousin would only pave the way, she would at once send an invitation to Pagwell.

When Ben received the letter he was in the midst of composing a sermon on the grand old text wherein the weary and the heavy-laden are invited to come for rest. At once he laid his work aside; before evening he was in Pagwell.

"I hope that there is, as the letter says, nothing serious the matter, but it is easy to see by her tone that Maggie is nervous and out of sorts. She was always delicate, I think—more delicate than we realized. You will go to her, won't you, Wentworth?"

Ben pleaded, as after the rector had entered and greeted his visitor with a show of cordiality, tempered by a shade of constraint, the young man disclosed his errand.

Mark seemed embarrassed. He stroked his beard, he twisted his watchguard into knots, for the space of several minutes he was silent.

Ben glanced round the room as he waited for an answer. The furniture seemed to have been lately renewed, but some familiar objects met his eye; in a conspicuous place on the wall hung the illuminated text, "Quit you like men; be strong."

"I—I couldn't go to Mrs. Dykes for some time to come at least," stammered Mark at last.

Ben's face clouded.

"I bear Maggie no animosity; I forgave her long ago. But the fact is——"

"Well?"

"The fact is that—that—I am to be married before the week is out."

"Married?"

"Yes—to Amy Battiscombe. Amy is," in a half apologetic tone, "one of the dearest girls in all the world. She has been the greatest help to me in the parish, and will make an invaluable wife for a clergyman."

Certain words which Mark had uttered when Ben last saw him occurred to the young man's remembrance now: "In a year's time you will have forgotten the events of this day; to me they bring a life-long sorrow." Which of us has forgotten first? he asked himself. But he grasped Mark by both hands, and a look of eager pleasure came into his honest face. "I am glad—so glad, Wentworth," he exclaimed. "I had not heard your news. Of course it is natural—most natural—that you should marry, and I am delighted to hear you speak so warmly of Miss Battiscombe. Never mind about Switzerland. I will," in a tone of sudden resolution, "go to Maggie myself, and take her your message of forgiveness. I'll set out at once; I always meant to take a holiday some time this month. News of your happy prospects will be more welcome to Maggie than even a sight of yourself. I congratulate you with all my heart."

Ben kept his word. He set out without delay for Switzerland. When he reached the inn at the summit of the Bel Alp—having made the ascent from Brieg, in the Rhone Valley—he was received with effusion by the landlord, who came out from his bureau to meet the new-comer, but whose face grew suddenly grave when Ben asked for Mrs. Dykes.

Maggie had the day before been taken dangerously ill. An English doctor who happened to be staying at the inn shook his head ominously when he was summoned to the patient. Mrs. Groves' sad prophecy of old Sommercombe days had come true. Maggie

must, according to the medical opinion, have been for some time in rapid consumption. It was "a thousand pities that she had been brought to the high mountains, out of reach of regular treatment." The doctor held out no hope of his patient's recovery; he advised that her father should be sent for at once.

Maggie lay on a bed in an upper room of the inn. Her long hair streamed over the pillow; a bright colour was on her cheeks; a bright, anxious, eager light was in her dark eyes. Through the windows came the gleam of snow-capped mountains; the tinkle of goat-bells was in the air. But Maggie seemed to see a little English moorland village, with clustering cottages, and an old grey church; she seemed to hear the splash of waves upon a rocky shore.

"Is Mark coming? I want Mark," she said to her husband, who stood near the bed.

It was not Mark, but Ben, who entered the room, with noiseless footsteps. It was Ben who knelt by her side, who covered her hand with kisses, who turned to hers eyes full of yearning love. It was Ben who told her in a voice broken sometimes by sobs, of Mark's new happiness, and who gave her the assurance of Mark's forgiveness.

Then as the day wore on, and the shades of evening fell, it was Ben who spoke to Maggie of the fast-approaching close of the day of earthly life, and of the dawn of the eternal day which knows no night.

His unfinished sermons on words addressed to the weary and heavy-laden came to the young clergyman's mind; in low, reverent voice he repeated simple words designed for rustic listeners on a divine promise of unending rest.

Evening passed into night, and night into morning. The door of the sick room opened, to admit a new-comer. Maggie's father approached and stood beside the bed. A look of glad recognition greeted him; then the wife's dark eyes sought Will's with a lingering gaze. But it was to Ben that Maggie's last look was turned; it was Ben who held her hand fast locked in his own; it was with Ben's voice whispering in her ear the name which is above every name that, with a smile lighting her dying face, she passed away to rest.

Just at that moment the Pagwell church bells rang out merrily, and Mark Wentworth passed down the aisle, his bride upon his arm.

* * * * *

Years have gone by. Ben Grayson is still vicar of Sommercombe. There is nothing conventional or ultra-clerical about him. He delights in outdoor exercise, is a daring rider, and a fairly expert fisherman. Out of the pulpit—where he preaches the shortest and plainest, if the most earnest of sermons—he is

remarkable chiefly for his unflagging cheerfulness. But all Sommercombe knows that the "parson's" unaffected sympathy and his manly counsel are always at the service of the tried and the sorrowful even among the poorest of his parishioners.

Ben retains his old friendship for Mark Wentworth. He is often a guest at Pagwell rectory; with the children of the house, and especially with a little maiden named Margaret, "Uncle Ben," as the visitor is called, is supreme favourite.

"What our vicar wants is a wife," Mrs. Vellacott—grown older and greyer than when we first saw her—frequently remarks to her neighbour, Mrs. Groves. Ben shakes his head when the remark is repeated to himself. He will never marry, he says.

Often on a Sunday evening in summer, when services are over for the day, Ben makes his way to a quiet corner of the old churchyard, where Maggie Iykes and her mother lie, side by side. He stands for a while with his face turned to the sunset, lost in quiet thought. The softened memory of a grief from which all bitterness has passed is in his heart, as he makes his way to his lonely home. That home will always be lonely for Ben, but for its haunting memories of bygone days. Ben Grayson is content to remain a bachelor all his days for the love of little Madge.

WILL-O'-THE-WISPS.

“**N**OW, it is an old law from time immemorial, that when the moon stands exactly where it stood yesterday, and the wind blows exactly as it did yesterday, all the Will-o'-the-Wisps born in that hour should be privileged if they choose it to live among human beings . . . and exercise their power among them.

“There are Will-o'-the-Wisps in the town, though I don't know exactly where.

“Just you beware of Will-o'-the-Wisps!”

So writes Hans Christian Andersen; and he was a judge of these matters. I have occasionally met them here and there in the course of my travels; they have not harmed me, thanks to a charm I carry, a sure protection against Will-o'-the-Wisps. Whoever has it—and they are not many—may venture fearlessly to make friends with them, live with them, eat with them, play with them, dance with them. They are entertaining fellows; the best story-tellers in the world—if you can only get them to sit still long enough to finish the tale they once begin. But that is difficult.

For a Will-o'-the-Wisp is a restless creature, a creature of nerves and electricity, often dissatisfied, sometimes unhappy. Humanity oppresses him, ties him down, confines him to one place when he would be in a dozen; and he cannot forget the freedom of the marshes nor the delicious, mocking glee that thrilled him, as he danced above some treacherous morass where no more solid foot than his dare venture. And the instinct of bewildering is strong in him still. Quicksands and risky speculations are his element; he is never happier than when he has enticed an unsuspecting friend on unsafe ground, and sees him wallowing in quagmires of unsound reasoning, while he flits merrily over the surface, sporting with glittering illusions like himself. He is essentially a wandering spirit of finer intuitions and less substance than ours; excitement is as necessary to him as water to a fish; he cannot live without it. Therefore, what he takes up to-day is thrown aside to-morrow; the absorbing interest of the moment disgusts him half an hour hence; he begins each new undertaking with tremendous energy; but the flame soon flits elsewhere; his ardour does not cool, indeed, because it had no heat, only the appearance. And hence the unreliability of which his mortal relatives complain. Above all, his fancy must

be tickled, his vanity appeased, his emotions stimulated, if he is to be kept in tolerable humour. And a Will-o'-the-Wisp out of temper is a cranky comrade.

The first with whom I had any intercourse lived in an Irish fishing village, when the century was not quite so old as it is now. He had not then arrived at years of discretion; but he owned the longest legs, the merriest smile, and the richest "brogue" of any lad of my acquaintance. With the long legs he scoured the country far and near—it was a sight to see him leaping ditches!—in the softest accents of his soft, rich "brogue" he launched malicious truths, pointed with wit, to sting his victims and yet compel their laughter; knowing—the rascal—he might venture with impunity, his merry smile and roguish eyes disarming anger.

"He's a mighty quare boy, is Masther George!" the servants said. And they were right. "Master George" systematically robbed the dairy when all the world besides was fast asleep; Master George tied the parlour and the kitchen cats together by their tails; Master George hung the governess's Sunday dress and bonnet out of the garret window, with such skill that the neighbours flocked to know if the poor lady had committed suicide;—small wonder, if she had!—Master George put vinegar and pepper in the Christmas pudding. "There's no knowin' what the boy'll be afther nixt!" lamented the cook; "my heart's broke wid him intirely. He's a limb of Satan, an' that's what he is. No less!"

At the age of seventeen Master George "went a-coortin'." I cannot say he "fell in love;" but he "went a-coortin'." His innamorata was the daughter of the village doctor, a fair-haired child of thirteen, who gave herself airs, and had not quite made up her mind whether a pensive or a gay expression best suited her style of beauty. She was popular in the district and, consequently, haughty. Her brother drove a prosperous trade in fishing-rods, peg-tops, cricket balls and "bull's-eyes," tribute paid to him by eager aspirants to his sister's favour, for his permission to lift their caps to her without an introduction and, through his medium, offer bouquets of Chinese roses, forget-me-nots, and scented geraniums at her shrine. Master George, however, paid no tribute, offered no roses, forget-me-nots nor scented geraniums; he asked for no introduction, and did not require any one's permission to lift his cap to any lady he chose to honour by a salutation; but he would walk a mile and a half to a trysting place before a certain iron gate, and, climbing up into an old gnarled hawthorn tree, would wait perhaps an hour to win a smile from her severity. He did not care to speak to her then. Later on, indeed, he might have been seen hurrying down the high road at a furious pace—as the coachman said: "Just touchin' the ground in spots!"—until he came in sight of the doctor's house, when, putting his hands in his pockets, he generally shoved his old straw hat a little farther

backwards on his head, and slacking his speed to a careless saunter, began to whistle "*Du, du liegst mir im Herzen,*" with variations and additions. He had won poor "Missie's" heart by that time, and made her life as wretched as he could, taking a huge delight in rousing jealousy and bringing an angry glow of wounded pride into her chubby cheeks. But she liked him no doubt the better for the pain he gave her; she was a woman, you see, though a small one, and he a Will-o'-the-Wisp, a soulless creature of nerves and electricity, trying to satisfy a craving for he knew not what.

And so he played with Missie's vanity as he played with many a girl's love in the years to come; because by this means he secured himself much pleasurable excitement, lasting over two or three days, or weeks, or months, during which he experienced quite a number of exquisite thrills and collected a number of delicately perfumed memories—perfumed with the scent of hay-fields, jessamine, woodbine and meadowsweet! The trouble of walking miles in a hot sun, or sitting in the hawthorn tree on awkward knobs, with crooked branches battering in his hat or scratching out his eyes, only increased his ardour; physical discomforts stimulating his nerves to keener appreciation of spiritual joy, much as pickles and caviare do the appetite for dinner. Gentlemen of his calibre will be often found enduring considerable voluntary pain.

For the same reason I have heard of his walking up and down a narrow, ugly street in the University town, hours when he might have been playing football in the Park—walking up and down, I say, whistling like Orpheus, merely to see a pair of dark eyes sparkle from an upper window. Then he would wander off contented, to reappear next day at the same hour, with the same tune, and go through the same performance. And I asked myself, why? Not for the sake of the dark eyes, surely; for a fortnight hence the street knew him no more; he had found another object of affection. And, this time, a powdered wig in a barber's shop!

No; the explanation lay elsewhere. He climbed the hawthorn-tree, battered his hat, and scratched his hands, not for love of Missie—he did not care a jot for her—but for the sake of the sensation which her smiles and blushes caused him. He balanced discomfort against the subtle pleasure of a quickened pulse, and concluded the last outweighed the first. The same way, in deciding between the miserable street and football, the barber's wig and dinner: it was all a matter of calculation; and, if a Will-o'-the-Wisp's idea of amusement does not precisely coincide with ours, his idea of logical behaviour must. He is an eminently reasonable creature.

Among the conflicting elements composing his character there is, perhaps, none more startling than his truthfulness. I said, the instinct of bewildering is as strong in him, though hampered by mortality, as when he danced in freedom through his native

marshes. And so it is. But that instinct differs from deception as made familiar to us by our rogues and felons. It deludes us by a play on words, a delicate handling of nice distinctions, a breaking up of truth into component parts by the prism of a strong imagination; there is no lie, no shadow of falsehood to revolt our sense of right. Perhaps, indeed, we may be disappointed by his schemes as Arabs are, when a mirage shows them palms and cooling springs where only burning sand exists; but the delusion, if there be one, is on our side, not his; he speaks enigmas, we are fools who cannot read them. In matters of every-day occurrence he is as downright, as practical, as uncompromising as an ideal Briton. Black is black, not white, to him; and no flow of eloquence can make him call it grey. He is jealous of his honour, too, in this respect; his word is his bond, and careless as he may be of his reputation otherwise, he will resent the smallest imputation on his truth.

Another trait almost equally surprising is his pleasure in the society of children. He seeks them constantly. If by chance he meets an urchin on the road, the probability is the little fellow finds himself hoisted in the air, presently enjoying the novelty of riding a two-legged horse. In the nursery, the Will-o'-the-Wisp is Lord of Misrule; uproarious merriment and boisterous games follow close on his heels, complaints, too, and tears. He delights in perplexing and tormenting the "kids," in rousing angry passions and fermenting strife. Yet, strange to say, though children are unhappy in his neighbourhood, they cry more bitterly when he goes away. More wonderful still, Master George has been known to lull a fractious child to sleep when mother and nurse had both failed, by perhaps the least soothing of all cradle songs:*

"Good morrow!" said the Fox. "Good morrow to you, sir.
And what is that you're aitin'?"

"'Tis a fine fat goose that I've stolen from you,
An' won't you come an' taste him?"

Moderideroo-aroo, aroo aroo aroo aroo-a,

Moderideroo aroo arani.

Moderideroo, Moderideroo!

"Good morrow," said the Fox in the mornin'.

"Now, Fox, kneel down an' say your prayers,
For you must go before your Maker."

"Oh!" said the Fox, "I've none to say,
For I was bred a Quaker."†

Moderideroo aroo, &c. &c.

The Fox, he faced the six-foot wall,
Where men were afraid to follow.

"As high as you ride an' as great is your pride,
'Tis you will be low on the morrow!"

Moderideroo aroo, &c. &c.

* Moderideroo means "a little red dog," i.e. a fox. I spell the Irish phonetically according to Master George's pronunciation. May the shade of St. Patrick pardon him, the wretched boy could not spell it himself!

† The old Irish believed the Quakers were Atheists!

The Fox ran fast, but they ran him down at last
 In the woods by wild Slieve Na Bordoge,
 An' when the race was done, 'twas then to see the fun,
 Moderiderashin à-go!
 Moderideroo aroo, &c. &c.

When the "humour was on him," Master George was certainly a great story-teller. He was born with a silver tongue in his head. By an inflexion of a vowel and a motion of his hand, he could express infinite distance; by the rolling of a consonant and the swaying of his body, the surging of a brutal multitude clamouring for a hero's death. Fairies, giants, knights, and distressed damsels haunted the glades of enchanted forests, danced and caroused there, strove, were rescued and rewarded bodily before our eyes, whenever he spun his brilliant fancies in the gloaming. In the days of which I speak, he was seen to best advantage sitting on the hall doorsteps of his Irish home, with a couple of youngsters leaning up against him and his four-year-old sister between his knees. Then the yellow sun, in gilding the elms, streamed through the branches on the group, touching his rough hair tenderly, lighting up his thin, eager face with sudden glory, as every now and then, with an impulsive movement, he turned it skywards. Far across the meadows where the hay was still in cocks, the calm grey sea spread like an emblem of peace, and the hum of insects in the after grass, coming through the cool silence of the evening, increased the witchery of the charm he used. The nearest approach to tenderness he allowed himself to show, softened his keen blue eyes, when he saw his brothers listening with bated breath, and felt his sister's baby fingers tightening upon his hand.

But Will-o'-the-Wisps are often unhappy with a sorrow peculiar to their race. Through the vexations of common life, their careless gaiety seems able to bear them tolerably unscathed; but it is powerless against the sadness united with their very laughter. In youth it plagues them little, but every year adds somewhat to the weight, and, except they find the antidote, which is rare, old age to them is full of misery. Master George was no exception to the rule; already he suffered vaguely without knowing why he suffered, especially in the spring, when all creation throbs with passionate unreasoning impulse and sighs for the fulfilment of a nameless want. Then he became oppressed with gloom, and for days would scarcely speak, or, seized with feverish unrest and want of sleep, would range the country from morning to night, like one trying to free himself from mental pain. At other times the tendency showed itself merely in the sharpness of his wit, the kind of songs he liked to hear and the hours at which he chose to hear them. For instance, when the moon shone fitfully of a windy night, and the surf thundered against the rocks, then nothing pleased him better than to put out the lights, open the window shutters, and

sit staring out at the storm, listening to the wails of the fishermen's wives, "when the harbour bar is moaning," or poor Mary's lament as she "called the cattle home." I have seen the colour fade from his cheeks to an ashen white, with the intensity of suppressed emotion, excited by a splendid rendering of Rubinstein's "Azra;" and for days after he might have been found in unexpected places and positions lost in thought. If by any means he could be induced to give an answer when questioned, he always replied in the words of the song:

"Ich gehöre jenen Azra die sterben wenn sie lieben—*wenn sie lieben!*"

The country in which he lived was certainly one calculated to develop eccentricity, by reason of its desolate character. There the famine of '47-8 raged with peculiar violence, and the majority of those whom the famine spared the fever carried off. The gentry were almost all ruined, the peasants more than decimated in those sad years, and the stricken remnant still bear the impress of past misery. They are a silent, discontented, struggling race, who nurse grievances, resent and brood over hardships, warming their hands at the smouldering turf that heats their cabins.

Until the last few years the nearest railway ended at a station twenty-seven miles distant, and the only mode of approaching the district was by driving in a "jingle" (inside car) for wearisome hours through uninteresting scenery, where signs of human habitations were few and far between. These became rarer, advancing farther west, until in the immediate neighbourhood of Master George's home they almost disappeared. Ranges of low, brown hills here break the monotony of the bogs, and looking seawards, the waves of the Atlantic may be seen leaping frantically into the air against the jagged edges of many islands. The very atmosphere feeds imagination. The strong exhilarating breeze that pipes fantastic tunes in the telegraph wires along the high road, and blows the winter sea fogs through the valleys, shaping them strangely into forms that creep and crawl along the barren slopes, and wraps the leafless trees in eery shrouds, is laden with tales of shipwrecks, spirits, warnings and untimely deaths; the limitless stretch of bog, dotted with brown pools where the bog-bean grows, and round whose margin the cotton grass waves its silver tuft of down, fosters melancholy. He who has once seen the autumn sun setting over the moors, and watched the brown earth barred with crimson, and the marshy waters stained like blood—who has once waited while the sluggish fever mists unwound themselves from their lurking places in the swamp, will not easily forget the fascination that held him, until the night wind, sighing sadly through the rushes, broke the spell.

But the Will-o'-the-Wisp seeks no sympathy in his restlessness. Perhaps, instinctively, he feels the uselessness of such appeal

how could a stranger comprehend what he himself can scarcely understand? And so he bears his pain in silence. Once, and once only, did I hear this nameless discontent alluded to. It was the summer Master George had gone "a-courting." He had been unusually serene and well-behaved that season, so that the neighbours fondly hoped he had turned over a new leaf. Missie could have told another tale, poor child! But that, as the doctor's housemaid said, is "neither here nor there." Towards the end of my visit he constituted himself my cavalier, escorting me in my rambles with a devoted gallantry that would have been touching in any but a Will-o'-the-Wisp. We climbed hills together, read Bacon's essays under the shadow of grey rocks, fell out and in again unceasingly, and the evening before I left we took a farewell walk to see the sun setting over the sea. Heavy indigo clouds dashed with lurid flame were piled overhead leaving the horizon bright and clear; to the north-west, tendrils of violet and rose crossed a background of opal, and the low, dark islands in the distance were set in a sheet of silver that, gradually losing its lustre, changed slowly into a leaden grey. We were silent a long while. Presently I turned to my companion to call his attention to a strange effect of light and shade along the coast; but the expression of his face checked me. His thin sarcastic lips had set themselves into a hard straight line and his eyes were full of a mute misery.

"Not in entire forgetfulness,"

he quoted to himself,

"And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,
From God who is our home."

"Did I?" he continued absently. "I can't remember. But the children know."

The reflection of his mood on mine checked my desire to laugh. "Is that the reason you like being with them?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered in the same dreamy manner. "They have the secret of happiness. 'Heaven shines about them in their infancy,' you know. There is a blank—a want—a void in me. And it aches!"

"Bless the boy, is he a poet?" I exclaimed.

He started and stared at me in bewilderment, like one awakened suddenly from sleep. Picking up a pebble he flung it carelessly over the cliff.

"What rot!" he answered politely. "Let us go home to tea, Mavourneen. Oh, the muffins and the crumpets *and* the buttered rolls!"

Next day, as I was driving in to catch the coach at the market town—jogging dismally along in the grey twilight of a wet morn-

ing—when about a mile distant from Master George's home, a light figure leaped over the hedge and on to the steps of the "jingle;" a shower of cotton grass and purple orchids fell on my lap, and a merry, sunburnt face with brilliant eyes and a mocking smile poked itself in between the leathern curtains.

"Mavourneen! Mavourneen!" said the Will-o'-the-Wisp pathetically, in the richest accents of his glorious "brogue:"

"Go where glory waits thee,
But when fame elates thee,
Oh, then remember me!"

He dropped into the road, apparently overcome by emotion, and, drying imaginary tears in a very ragged handkerchief, disappeared up a muddy "boreen."*

That was the last I saw of him for many a long year.

It is a curious fact that, as a rule, if a Will-o'-the-Wisp lives to become a man, he commences his career as a medical student and ends it as a politician. Between whiles he generally passes through various stages of socialism and concludes by discovering that every scheme for the improvement of mankind is vanity and vexation of spirit. Of the five or six I have known, one only altered the programme. He began as a man of fashion, continued as an artist, and has finished up, for the present, as a tradesman. He is always a mighty traveller; the restless instinct remains strong to the hour of his death—and afterwards too, if tradition may be trusted. However that may be, in his lifetime he wanders continually, up and down the world and round and round it, sometimes on business, sometimes for pleasure; but always seeking the "blue flower" of which Novalis tells, whose perfume he perceived in boyhood, mingling with that of the pinks and jasmine in his father's garden, or wafted by the sea breeze over the dreary bogs.

Master George was the joy of the medical school he joined. The students named him, instantly, "the cherub," on account of his yellow hair and radiant eyes and, also, because his views in general were not angelic. They said, "Look here, he's perfectly mad, you know!" And the whimsical freaks in which his eccentricity indulged seemed to acknowledge them correct. To-day he gravely collected tracts; to-morrow knockers. This week he studied chemistry, reduced the next to practice, when he innocently smashed a flask of horrid odour where it produced effect on all except himself. "To disinfect the place;" he said, in explanation. "There was a beastly smell before!" One month he would appear in shiny hats and "dreamy" gloves, faultlessly-cut coats and pointed shoes; he then frequented balls and concerts, flower-shows, "at homes," and knew the smartest people in the town.

* Lane.

But presently he voted "everything a bore," bestowed the shiny hat upon the boot-black at the corner, and gave the crossing-sweeper all his dreamy gloves; donning the shabbiest of medical attire, he went in hard for beer, tobacco, music halls and slang, and practised boxing with a mattress every morning. As for study—well, he managed that when he had time.

A harum-scarum, good-for-nothing scamp, you say? Not at all. Only a Will-o'-the-Wisp. He was gaining knowledge of men and morals, experience of human nature. Others might forget themselves in fun or dissipation, he never. While the majority of those who thought they knew him took him for a hair-brained fool, his laughing eyes observed, his memory retained, his clear, discerning faculties put two and two together, sifted and solved the men who deemed themselves superior to him, and twined them round his finger at his will, by playing on their vanity. Whatever he heard or read, he proved either false or true; he took nothing on trust. Without seeming to deny or doubt a statement, he satisfied himself as to its correctness by-and-by. His own accuracy was remarkable. As time went on, it was observed that Master George, who could not live without excitement, to whom monotony was unendurable, exercised, where his interest was aroused, a patient perseverance in pursuing questions to their final issue, that was scarcely short of genius. But curiosity once satisfied, the subject lost its charm; it was thrown aside to make room for another.

As soon as he had taken out his degree as doctor of medicine, which he did with great distinction, he began his wanderings over the globe. He knocked down a Pasha, during the "Bulgarian horrors," for interfering with his patients; he shot tigers in India, naturalized in Java, ate "taro roots" at Taheiti, played "poker" for tobacco plugs in Australia, hunted lions in Africa, and fraternized, meanwhile, with Mazzini, Bakunin, and Marx—seeking the blue flower always, and in vain.

After more years than I care to mention, we met at last on the Ponte Vecchio at Florence. He had not changed as much as I. His yellow hair was, perhaps, a shade darker, his eyes a little sadder, but his mocking smile remained as bright and honest as when he courted Missie from the hawthorn tree, and his sharp wit still was robbed of half its sting by the softness of his well remembered "brogue." He was on his way then to China, still seeking the blue flower.

I heard of him from time to time, through mutual acquaintance and the papers. He wrote a popular romance, contributed some clever articles to the "Quarterly," and one fine day, to the surprise of all the world but me, he kissed the blarney-stone and became "a mumber o' parliamint!" And then he married.

This winter the Fates have brought us together again. *Alle schöne Sachen sind drei*, say the Germans. His wife is with him—a handsome, practical, tender-hearted woman—and their little son, who

sits upon my knee and slyly gives me heliotrope "that holds a secret!" We two steal away from the "big people" in the evenings and, cosily hidden in a corner of a quiet corridor, tell one another stories, till that horrid "bed-time" breaks our tête-à-tête and sends me back to seek for sense in small talk. But not when Master George is there. Civilized and humanized as he has become under the wise influence of his better half, he carries with him still the fresh, brisk atmosphere of his Irish home. In spite of parliamentary dignity, in spite of having, as he terms it, "put on flesh," his humour is as agile, though more kindly, than when we quarrelled on the low brown hills so many, many years ago. He will always be somewhat of a Will-o'-the-Wisp.

Yesterday my wee boy-lover asked me, suddenly, across the table as we lingered over our fruit, "what the blue flower meant."

Master George glanced at me roguishly and cast down his eyes.

"Come over here," I said, "and I will tell you."

The child obeyed and clambered into my lap.

"There is a flower," I began, with my arm round him, "it is blue, and in the centre it holds a dewdrop, just like a tear. The whole earth is filled with its perfume; but no one has ever seen it. Not every one can smell it; some have not senses fine enough except in dreams. But whoever can perceive it, is seized with a great longing to possess the flower; he can never rest afterwards; he must go looking, and looking for it all his life. Sometimes he forgets it for awhile and is happy; and then, perhaps, when he is talking, or writing, or working, a whiff of that sweet, vague perfume is blown across his face, and he must wander off again in search of what has never yet been found; and look, and look, and look for it until he dies."

"But what is it?" asked the child again.

While I had been speaking, Master George had not raised his eyes from his wife's hand, which he had taken and was playing with. He now looked up into her face, with a smile of affection and gratitude, as bright as the clear shining after rain.

"Look here, Arthur," he said, touching a pansy she wore near her throat and pointing to one in his button hole, "the man who wrote that knew nothing about the blue flower at all. It has been found; mamma has it and she gave some to me ever so long ago. Some people call it heartsease!"

"There's lots of it in the garden!" whispered the boy to me, putting his arms round my neck. "I'll get you some after dinner; and you'll wear it. Won't you? But there'll be no tears in what I'll give you! I'll shake them all out first!"

ELWYN KEITH.

A TRAMP IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

BRIMFUL of enthusiasm begot by a fresh perusal of that never-dying old ballad, "The Battle of Otterburn," we had originally intended to make Newcastle the starting point of our Northumbrian tramp, and to follow the road which Sir Henry Percy took in the year 1388, on his way to recover his captured pennon from the Douglas who lay encamped at Otterburn, passing through Ponteland (the e is long, if you please), Belsay, Longwhitton, and Elsdon.

But the counsel of an antiquarian and enthusiastically Northumbrian friend, who, a few days previously, had made the pilgrimage along the Roman Wall with us, prevailed, and we took train to Hexham, whence we would commence an eight days' circuit of the county.

Quiet, picturesque Hexham, once the seat of an important tan-glove and hat trade, almost deserves a paper to itself, so much is there in and about it to interest the stranger; but we must pass on, and leaving the town by the coach-road, built in 1827 to relieve the Scotch traffic on the more easterly route, strike due north in the direction of Chollerford. We pass along Homers Lane, a corruption of Holkmarsh Lane, having the beautiful North Tyne river on our right, stopping at a gate to examine a curious old stone, upon which is carved a sword-blade, probably one of the boundaries of the ancient Hexham Abbey lands, and passing the site of the cottage wherein was enacted that terrible tragedy known as the "Murder of Joe the Quilter," cross the river by a suspension bridge and are at Warden. Here there is a church which deserves attention. Like Hexham Abbey, it has a disproportionately long transept; its tower is a rare instance of pure Saxon, but the body of the church is largely built of Roman stones from the Wall not far distant, many of which show the mason marks; some of the windows are remarkable as being of the pattern so familiar in Ireland, broader at the base than at the top.

From Warden we follow a pleasant, flower-girt lane, cross the line of the Roman Wall at Chesters, the fine seat of Mr. Clayton, in the grounds of which are the most marvellous Roman remains in Britain—the ruins of the City of Cilurnum, and the almost perfect abutment of a bridge over the North Tyne—and halt for our mid-day meal at the pleasant Chollerford Inn. The Roman remains at Cilurnum were alluded to in a paper upon the

Roman Wall, in the "Holiday Number" of this magazine for 1884; but since then much excavation has taken place, and many objects of interest have been unearthed, amongst them being the entire western gate of the city, a very perfect bath house, and what the writer believes, from the human remains found there, to have been an "astrinum," or place for burning dead bodies.

From Chollerford, where, it may be remembered, Jock o' the Side and his companions cut a tree down to make scaling ladders for Newcastle walls, a beautifully-situated place, much resorted to by anglers and by holiday makers from the "canny toon," we pass through the village of Humshaugh, and by a field path arrive at Haughton Castle, a very fine specimen of an old Border fortress adapted to modern requirements, beautifully situated on rising ground overlooking the river, which here is broad and swift, and surrounded by fine larch and pine trees. A hundred years ago Haughton Castle was a mere collection of ruins, but the extreme thickness of the walls, and their extent in the original portion, still testify that in the old stirring days it was a stronghold of great importance.

Close by the river are the remains of a paper mill, whence were issued under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, in 1793, forged *assignats* in vast numbers, for the purpose of embarrassing the already sufficiently embarrassed French National Assembly.

We cross the river by a primitive ferry, worked by means of a wire rope stretched across, pass through Barrasford, and strike over hill and dale in the direction of Swinburne. Swinburne Castle, prettily situated amidst trees which grow to the edge of a typical Northumberland burn, is a desolate-looking place, which has changed hands many times since the waning of its importance as a Border fortress. There is some good Jacobean work about the domestic offices, but otherwise there is no need for a halt, so we go on until we reach an open grass space, of which the surface is twisted and contorted into innumerable mounds and circles. Here there stood evidently a British camp and village, and, possibly, from the proximity of Watling Street, a Roman fort. We believe that no excavations of any extent have been made here, but a cursory view seems to point to the fact that in the place of simple earth masonry was employed here, and we heard that the Newcastle antiquaries intended to make a thorough exploration of the ground.

Here we join the western branch of the Watling Street, coming from Corbridge and crossing the Wall at Portgate on the old Newcastle and Carlisle military road, and here we embark on that wild, desolate region which may most aptly be termed the Cock-Pit of England; as about every hill, and valley, and stream linger tales of the old days, when Englishman and Scot rarely met but to exchange blows.

Watling Street goes in a provokingly straight line over hill and

dale through a hilly district of grass-land, thinly inhabited except by black-faced sheep and sturdy black cattle, until we reach Redesdale. Redesdale is an ugly little village of the usual North Country, brown brick, and slate roof type; noticeable nowadays as being the place where the Armstrong guns built at Newcastle are tested. Here are the remains of some iron-works and quarries, the latter dating from Roman times.

We are now in Redesdale, in old days the very wildest part of a lawless and wild country, inhabited by people whose business it was to "reive" cattle and fight, and whose pastimes were drinking, gambling, and cock-fighting. Over no people in England, perhaps, has such a marvellous change been brought about in so short a time; and for genuine religious devotion, for hospitality, for honesty and frugality, for intelligence and sobriety, we, during many years of tramping in different parts of the land, have never met their equals. The old Redesdale clan names still exist—Halls, Reeds, Potts, Hedleys, and Fletchers—and to some extent old customs and prejudices linger; but for aught else it is hard to believe that such lawless blood can run in the veins of such good, exemplary folk.

We descend from Redesdale village until we get to Woodburn, another ugly village, situated on the Reedwater. On the left here are the grass-grown remains of the Roman station *Habitancum*, but as they are unexplored they call for no remark.

We ascend a stiffish hill, descend, and after crossing two bridges just before reaching Troughend Hall, strike off to the right into the pretty village of Otterburn.

Troughend is famous in old Border minstrelsy as being the seat of those "false Halls" who set upon Percy Reed, as told in the ballad bearing his name, beginning:

"God send the land deliverance
Frae every reiving, riding Scot!
We'll sune hae neither cow nor ewe:
We'll sune hae neither staig nor stot."

The story is a pathetic one, and tells how Percy Reed, who was at feud with the Crosiers of Liddesdale, went out hunting with Johnny, Willy, and Tommy Hall of Troughend; how they came in sight of five Crosiers bent on revenge for the hanging by Percy of one of their clan, and how the "false Ha's," instead of sticking by Percy, turned against him, and helped in his murder; his last words being addressed to a poor man who brought him drink:

"A farewell to my followers a',
And a' my neighbours gude at need;
Bid them think how the treacherous Ha's
Betrayed the life o' Percy Reed."

The Hall family still live at Troughend, one of the innumerable

instances in these parts of estates being unalienated through long years.

At the "Murray Arms" we find simple, unpretending accommodation, very welcome after our long tramp of 23 miles. Early the next morning we are up to visit the scene of the famous fight. As Englishmen we should like to take the ballad as truth, and believe that nine thousand Englishmen comfortably beat forty thousand Scots, but facts are stubborn things, and we know very well that three thousand four hundred Scots administered a very sound drubbing to eight thousand four hundred Englishmen; that Sir James Maxwell took Sir Ralph Percy, Lord Montgomery took Sir Henry, and that every English knight fell except Sir Matthew Redman, governor of Berwick, who fled and was pursued and taken by Lord Lindsay.

Of the scene of the fight little can be distinguished. It took place on the ground behind the village, as far as the school house beyond the plantation, wherein stands the pillar marking where Douglas fell. Traces of the Scottish camp are said to be visible near the Greenchester farm, but the mounds are Roman, and although the Scots probably made use of the works, they have no direct connection with the Battle of Otterburn. On the site of the modern Otterburn Hall, where stood a castle, was probably the heat of the battle.

We cannot help indulging in a little reverie as we stand by the weather-beaten pillar which marks where the Douglas fell, the wind from the moorlands moaning through the pines, the rain plashing into the deep grass, and try to associate the peaceful scene around us with that moonlight slaughter on Saint Oswald's Day five hundred years ago. There is as much Scottish as English blood in the inhabitants of these parts, and although at the annual Border games held in every town, a little of the old national rivalry may be manifest in the wrestling and weight-putting contests, the mutual feeling is now of the most cordial friendship; the language spoken on either side of the Cheviots is identical, and Scottish names abound on the shop-fronts of the southern side of the Border.

We continue along the coach-road in a north-westerly direction, passing Shittleheugh Peel Tower on our right, the Watling Street approaching us on the left. Just before reaching a famous anglers' inn called the "Redesdale Arms," the old road crosses the river and runs with us as far as the church. We go on to the first house of Rochester Village—a school built largely of Roman stones—and, quitting the main road, follow a very rough, stony track to the right, which in ten minutes leads us through the south gate of the Roman station of Bremenium, now known as High Rochester, the massive stone work of which is still in fair condition.

Bremenium was considered the strongest fortress in the North,

and when we regard its position on a compact little hill commanding the pass of the Redesdale, and read that it was surrounded by a stone wall seven feet thick, beyond which was a ditch and a triple line of ramparts, we can realize that half-naked barbarians must have found it a sufficiently hard nut to crack.

The western gate is still in excellent preservation, and the northern and western walls are tolerably perfect when we remember that eighteen hundred years have passed since their erection. On the camp itself—for many years known as the Gallows Field from its having been the place of public execution—are two Peel Towers built of Roman stones, but within the last few years their old features have disappeared and they are now common-place byres. From the fact that the angles of the camp are rounded it would appear that Danes and Saxons used it as a fortress after the departure of the Romans. A mile to the east is a Roman cemetery, but with the exception of three "cippi" and pieces of pottery, nothing of special interest has been found there. To the west we can trace Watling Street crossing the hills in the direction of Jedburgh in Scotland.

From Bremenium we strike north-east on to the fells. We must steer for the Crow stone, our only guide being a scarcely distinguishable track running between two low walls of turf and known as the ancient cattle drove track. This we very soon lose, and are in solitude as complete as can be desired by the most cynical of anchorites. Not a human habitation is visible: nothing but heather-clad hills upon which graze flocks of sheep, broken here and there by a lichen-covered rock, or cut by tiny burns of dark brown water. The curlews and peewits circle above us, uttering their plaintive cries, and the fresh, sweet wind comes full in our faces across miles of moorland, putting new strength into our limbs, and explaining to us the remarkable longevity of the Border folk.

At length we are utterly adrift, and blame ourselves in no gentle terms for having pooh-poohed the advice given us before starting to take a compass; but a solitary farm is in sight, and we make straight for it. A large family of yellow-haired, bare-footed youngsters regard us in silent wonder as we enter, and the good woman who gives us a huge basin of milk, tells us that it is exactly three weeks since a stranger crossed her threshold. Of payment she will have none, but the bairns pocket pennies gleefully, and after trying to understand and to make ourselves understood upon general topics, we are shown the track way to be followed and push on.

An hour's good walking brings us down into the valley of the Coquet, to our mind most beautiful of Northumbrian rivers. We cross the river at Saint Michael's, and are glad enough to turn into the Rose and Thistle Inn, at the primitive out-of-the-way little village of Alwinton—pronounced Allington.

After an excellent lunch, served in a cleanly, simple style, we inspect the church, of which a curious feature is the separation of the nave from the chancel by a high flight of steps, and start for Glanton, that being the only place in the neighbourhood where we are likely to procure a bed. The country now assumes that highly-cultivated, pastoral character which in Northumberland of all counties, in our own southron ignorance we least expected to find.

Aluham was once an important place, we are told, but assuredly not a vestige of that importance now remains. By shaded lanes we reach Esslington Park, a beautiful demesne abounding in magnificent timber and antlered deer, through which we pass. Earl Ravensworth's house, a fine specimen of the English stately home, lies to the left, and we emerge close by Crawley Tower, an old Peel house, certainly built of Roman stones, and said to stand on the site of the station *Alauna Amnis*. Finally, as the shades of night gather fast around us, we reach Glanton, by no means sorry to find an excellent stopping place at the "Queen's Head," after rather a hard walk of twenty-six miles. The rain is pelting down when we resume our journey the next morning, so that the roads, which in the best weather are almost the worst in England, are almost impracticable for any but pedestrians. We are now in a picturesque, thinly-inhabited neighbourhood, which, from the innumerable traces of British camps and dwellings and roads about the hills, must in pre-historic days have been comparatively populous, and which is a veritable happy hunting ground for the lover of fairy lore and supernatural legends. Not that the people are in the smallest degree superstitious, for civilization and education seem to have knocked all the poetry and imagination out of them, and it would be hard to find a more matter-of-fact, prosaic individual than the average Northumbrian.

We direct our steps almost due north, having Fawdon Hill, the very head centre of fairyland, the abode of the Fairy Queen, on our left, and the Roman road known as the Devil's Causeway on our right.

Alas! for the poetry and romance of this country, the new railway between Rothbury and Coldstream is fast approaching completion, and the rough North Country "tripper" will be let loose into a district hitherto known only to the sportsman, the artist, and the antiquary.

We pass through Powburn, pretty country very highly farmed on either side of us, and at a couple of miles' distance are on Hedgeley Moor, where the Yorkists routed Queen Margaret in 1464, and which still retains its old wild features. Here we turn aside through a cottage garden to visit Percy's Cross, an ancient pillar carved with the famous silver crescent, erected to Sir Ralph Percy, slain here by Lord Montacute. Further on the road, on the left hand, are two huge stones, some forty feet apart, which mark Percy's Leap—a measurement which seems to prove that,

in spite of the evidence of armour, there must have been giants in those days.

There is little to note for some miles along this road, until we reach a group of cottages on the left hand, about a mile beyond Lilburne Tower, the residence of the famous Northumbrian Colingwoods, known as Wooler Haugh Head. One of these cottages is a humble inn and post office and general shop rolled into one; but in the coaching days the whole block was a hostelry of some fame. Here, it is said, the Duke of Surrey slept on his way to Flodden Field; but, be that as it may, it is historic that the English army encamped on the hills close by on the day before the battle.

A few miles away is Roddem Hall, one of the few properties in the kingdom which have remained in the possession of the same family since before the Conquest.

Another mile brings us into Wooler, the old road being carried over the new railway by a long bridge. The approach to Wooler is highly picturesque, Wooler itself is ugly and uninteresting in the extreme, but Wooler was once a town of no little importance. The annual games had just been finished when we arrived, so that there was no work being done, and the inns were crowded with big, stalwart natives, discussing the merits of the various falls practised by the wrestlers. In Wooler, as in most of these old-world towns, every one seems to be related to every one else, intense clannishness, local patriotism, and jealousy of outsiders exist, so that the stranger should be exceedingly careful in his remarks and opinions.

Outside Wooler rises Homildon or Humbledon Heugh, famous as the place where Archibald Douglas, burning to avenge the defeat of Hepburn, after plundering as far as Newcastle with eleven thousand men, was, on Holy Rood day, 1402, beaten and taken prisoner by Northumberland and Hotspur. The view from the hill top, and some ancient earthworks thereon, repay an ascent. Close by is the hill known as Teavering Bell, where in 1414 Umfraville with a vastly inferior force defeated the Scots, and which is the traditional site of the Northumbrian palace of Adgebrin.

Near the Black Bull Inn, in a field on the right hand, is a huge stone called variously, "The Gathering Stone," "The Standing Stone," or "The Bendor Stone," probably a Druidic monument.

Between here and Millfield there is nothing of interest except the fine mountain view on either hand. It was along this plain that the English army advanced towards Flodden, and at Millfield took place the combat in which Sir William Bulmer defeated Lord Home, and which is celebrated in the ballad, "The Ill Rode of Flodden."

The road now took us through a beautiful country past Flodden Field, but as an exploration would occupy some time, and as the

day was late we elected to push on at once to our sleeping quarters, the "Blue Bell" at Pallinsburn. It is well to know where the good inns lie in this thinly-peopled district, and it is impossible to say too much in praise of the modest, clean, thoroughly rural Pallinsburn Inn, or to speak too highly of the attention and civility of Mr. Young, the landlord. It should be noted, however, that there is but one guest chamber at the inn, so that notice of arrival should be given, if possible, a day or so beforehand.

We expressed our wish to see Flodden Field that evening; it is light in these northern latitudes until nine at night during the summer months, so Mr. Young put his white pony Yankee into his trap and drove us over to the farm of Mr. Dodds, who lives on the field. A genuine North Country welcome was given us by this typical Northumbrian farmer, and we proceeded over two or three fields, passed up a long avenue of pines, and plunged into the thickets of Flodden Hill—velvety turf under our feet, fern brake swarming with rabbits around us, and shaded by magnificent trees which have grown since the battle. On the summit can be traced the works of the Scottish batteries—of which the guns being placed too high were useless, and seven of which, known as the "Seven Sisters," were captured.

Deep in the recesses of the thicket is Sybil's Well, a palpably modern erection, but most picturesque. Getting clear of the plantation we stand on high ground, giving a splendid view of the battle field. Close by us is the clump of pine trees known as the "King's Seat," whence King James watched the English emerge from Baremoor Wood and march up Brankston Hill. To our right—on the south, that is—rise the Cheviots, the Cheviot itself standing out prominently. Below us lies Flodden Village; on our left hand the rude column called "The King's Stone," where, it is said, stood

"The Scottish circle deep
That fought around their king;"

and looking eastward the eye wanders over a peerless panorama of hill and dale, dark wood and sun-lit field, dotted here and there by a historic castle, such as Ford and Hume, or by tiny villages, the sluggish Till winding about like a silver ribbon.

Very few relics of the battle have been unearthed; indeed, the face of the country has so changed that it is almost impossible to picture the scene as it was presented to the English and Scottish warriors three hundred and seventy years ago.

We were up early the next morning for a swim in the deep placid waters of the Till, after which we shaped our course through Crookham Village to Ford Castle, the seat of Lady Waterford. After a while the inspection of castles and show-houses becomes a monotonous proceeding; but no one should penetrate as far as Flodden without visiting Ford Castle. Itself a fine specimen of an old Border castle adapted to modern uses, a handsome grey

turreted and battlemented pile standing in the midst of charming, carefully-tended gardens, full of fine old tapestry, old wood-work and old pictures, its chief attraction is its association with the luckless James the Fourth of Scotland, who fell at Flodden. The room in which he slept in the tower bearing his name is still retained in its original state: there is the canopied bedstead, the curiously-carved cabinet, the original tapestry on the walls, with interesting later additions in the shape of two fine old chairs, dated respectively 1638 and 1651, and the quaintest of old gilded looking-glasses. An inscription over the mantelpiece sets forth how "King James the Fourth of Scotland slept in this room on September 5th, 1513."

During the restoration of the castle a secret staircase built in the thickness of the walls was discovered connecting the monarch's room with that below, which was occupied by Lady Heron, from whom probably the Earl of Surrey gained that information concerning the disposition of the Scottish forces which prompted him to make the strategical move round by Twizel Bridge which proved so fatal to Scotland. From Ford Castle, too, it is said that Surrey sent James the challenge to decide the day by single combat.

Leaving Ford we proceed due north, through the village of Ford Forge to Etal. Here are the remains of a fine old castle, taken by James on his road to Flodden, in front of which are posted two cannon, recovered from the "Royal George;" a typical English manor house, and a pretty little village of rose-embowered cottages.

We pass on through rather an uninteresting country by the ruined Peel Tower of Duddoe and the hideous village of Grindon until we reach Norham.

The interest of Norham is of course centred in the ruins of the magnificent old castle standing on a lofty tree-girt eminence, the famous Tweed running below, and the fair expanse of Scotland stretching away in front. The keep of the castle still stands sturdily aloft, but of the vast extent of the precincts only an idea can be formed by following the grass-grown mounds and the shattered walls. A very good sketch is obtainable from a ruined gateway on the town side, through which the keep and the walls are seen to perfection. At the caretaker's lodge are some huge stone cannon balls hurled at the castle during the siege before Flodden by James the Fourth.

After lunch we cross the Tweed by a temporary bridge and are in the Land-o'-Cakes. By far the prettier as well as the shorter road to Berwick is along the Tweed on the English side, but we do not like to be so near Scotland without entering it, so we choose the northern road by the pretty church and village of Ladykirk.

Directly we cross the Border we are forced to admit that from a

pedestrian point of view matters are improved, for the roads are splendid and we meet with an accommodation to which we have been strangers since leaving Hexham—a multitude of clearly-painted finger-posts.

Four miles from Berwick we cross the lane which, running from the Tweed to the sea, marks the line dividing the Borough of Berwick from Scotland, and known as the March. Just before entering Berwick we see on our left Halidon Hill, where on July 19th, 1333, the Regent Archibald Douglas met with a terrible defeat at the hands of the English, and the place where Douglas fell with fourteen thousand of his men is still known as the Douglas Dyke.

Berwick, in spite of its historical associations, disappointed us much; but perhaps we were a little soured at the payment of an extortionate bill at an inn which had been recommended to us as being quiet and moderate and which we found to be in every way the reverse. Of old Berwick nothing remains but the walls and an old beacon tower near the station, whilst the huge railway viaduct has utterly spoiled the picturesque view of the old town which changed hands thirteen times in three centuries.

We now commence our return journey south, pass through Spittal, now a mass of factories, once famous as a smuggling place whereat cargoes landed from the Dutch boats were transported in innocent-looking carts to Lamberton, Mordington and Paxton tolls—depôts standing just on the March boundary—and whiskey contained in bladders helped to distend the already ample skirts of Spittal fishwives.

The road, straight and uninteresting, runs past Scremerston Colliery, makes a sharp turn to the left by the imposing gates of Haggerston Hall, and so on to the turning down to Beal Station, which we take, and eventually find ourselves on the sea-shore. Having ascertained beforehand the state of the tide—a very necessary precaution—we strip off boots and stockings, and, keeping by the line of posts, wade across the two miles and a half of sand to Holy Island, glad enough to obtain a temporary respite from the swarms of flies which have been irritating us all the way from Berwick.

We have ample occupation here during the five hours which must pass ere the tide will allow us to make the return journey. First and foremost, of course, is the famous Abbey church, of which no finer description can be given than that in the tenth verse of the second canto of "*Marmion*;" that venerable, storm-beaten pile, where the sturdy Saxon column and the round-headed arch are side by side with the more delicate Pointed work of a later date, the nave a small edition of Durham and probably an emanation from the same master mind, and remarkable for the graceful solitary arch connecting the building diagonally, the survivor of two which once supported the central tower. The ruins are in good preservation, and, after many years of damage and neglect by storm and the

hands of man, are carefully tended, the accumulation of sand which once threatened to fill up the building having been cleared away, and the place put under proper custody. Of the original extent of the buildings, the Priory itself and the extensive offices which invariably grew around priories, but a guess can be made, as so many cartloads of stones have been used for building purposes. The little church close by, built of Abbey stones, is curious, and from the effect of wind and weather looks more ancient than it really is. In the churchyard are some curious old graves and inscriptions, one of the latter, to the memory of George Burn, corporal of the mounted coastguard, recalling the stirring old days of the smugglers.

Fishing is the sole industry of this tree-less island; the inhabitants are a fine, healthy race, famous for their bravery and nautical skill, there being few more brilliant records of quiet, unobtrusive heroism than those of the two life-boats here stationed. The "Northumberland Arms" is an exceedingly moderate and comfortable inn, and on the day of our arrival the landlady was in great excitement, as she had been entertaining the Trinity Brethren, who had just come on their annual tour of inspection. We pay a short visit to the old castle, and start on our return journey in spite of warnings that we are too early; the right punishment for our self-sufficiency being that at about a hundred yards from the mainland we got into deep water, which necessitated the addition of our knickerbockers to our other doffed articles of clothing.

Instead of returning this way, we should recommend explorers proceeding south to hire a boat, and by way of the interesting Farne Islands, go straight to Bamborough.

The road to Belford runs quite straight on a ridge overlooking the sea, and being a high road is infested with tramps. In an hour and a half's time we pass the post informing us that we are seventy miles from Edinburgh, descend a steep hill into Belford Town, and in obedience to recommendation, turn into the fine old Blue Bell Inn.

Here the "Wellington," "Highflyer," and "Red Rover" coaches changed horses: every room in the house seems redolent with the departed life of those old days. We are the solitary guests to feed in the big coffee-room, with the carved mantelpiece and the dim hunting pictures; and occupy enormous rooms approached by a dark, gusty passage, along which our footsteps sound almost weirdly. We are not driven to bed, however, for lack of amusement, as an enterprising gentleman from the Mile End Road has a shooting gallery in the open space opposite the inn, and a wizened old farmer trolls forth untranslatable Northumbrian songs in the parlour until closing time.

Next morning we retrace our steps up the hill, turn sharp down to the right by the wall of Belford Park, and are on the road to Bamborough. After five miles of uninteresting walking we get

to the churchyard, into which, of course, we go, to visit the tomb of the immortal Grace Darling, a simple, unpretending monument consisting of the recumbent figure of the heroine, an oar by her side, her hands clasped on her breast, under a graceful canopy. Around her are the humble, wind-swept graves of the villagers, and to her left stretches the blue sea with the Farne Islands glittering in the sunshine. The grey, old, flat-roofed church is well worthy of a visit for its crypt, its interesting monuments, and the original storm-beaten monument of Grace Darling, of which the present one is a facsimile.

Bamborough Village is an exception to the ordinary run of Northumbrian villages, as it is really picturesque, being built around a plantation of trees and consisting of old-world houses. The Castle, exteriorly magnificent, hardly repays detailed inspection, as it has been completely modernized, and is used as a school for orphans in accordance with the will of Nathaniel Crewe, Bishop of Durham, into whose possession it came in 1715. As, however, its exterior features are unaltered, one can form a perfect notion of the appearance of these gigantic feudal strongholds, which elsewhere have either disappeared or are in ruins.

We follow the road by the coast, an utterly desolate, uninteresting and foot-maiming road, passing through the collections of huts dignified by the appellations of Swinhoe and Tuggall Villages, leaving North Sunderland on our left, and thankfully arrive at Embleton for lunch. Here is a very interesting church with a battlemented tower, and a fine old vicarage, which was once evidently a Border fortress, surrounded by trees, and forming a good sketch. A rough coast road takes us to what remains of once splendid Dunstanburgh Castle.

Here is utter solitude, but not silence, for in the calmest weather the North Sea dashes against the black perpendicular cliffs, upon the very brink of which the castle is built, with a sullen roar that never ceases. From the remains yet extant—the huge walls on the south and west, the gigantic semicircular bastions which guarded the entrance, and the two towers named after Queen Margaret and Lilburne, the whole inclosing about nine acres—Dunstanburgh must have been well-nigh impregnable. Indeed, it was probably of greater extent than now appears, as on promontories of land spared by the rage of the sea are ruins, and the sea-wall stops short at a chasm which is evidently of more recent formation.

Below Queen Margaret's Tower is the chasm known as the Rumble Churn, a frightful abyss sixty yards long and forty feet deep, into which the sea rushes with the roar of thunder, and sends its spray far and wide. Here, too, is laid the scene of the weird ballad by Matthew Gregory Lewis, of "Sir Guy the Seeker," and no fitter spot for ghostly legend could be chosen than Dunstanburgh when seen as we saw it—under an angry sky, the wind

howling and screaming, Rumble Churn roaring, and the black rocks on the shore almost invisible for the sheets of spray.

By a coastguard path we reach the rather picturesque fishing village of Craster—a favourite resort of Newcastle artists during the summer months, and remarkable for its fine stalwart people. From Craster we turn inland, pass Craster Tower, an old Border Peel, having Dunstan, the birthplace of Duns Scotus, “the most subtle doctor,” on our right; cross the railway at Little Mill Station, and, passing through beautiful country, every inch of which is cultivated, and villages which wear an air of substantial prosperity, much at variance with the groans about agricultural depression which we hear everywhere, arrive at Alnwick. Of Alnwick, our halting place for this, the sixth night of our tramp, so much has been written that to say anything would be merely to tread in well-worn footsteps. We put up at the “Nag’s Head,” an old-fashioned hostelry close by the market place; and, thanks to the presence of the Northumberland Militia, out for their annual training, we had about as lively a Saturday night as we could recall; the uproar, the shouting, the fighting being kept up with a vigour worthy of a better cause until well into Sunday. They were a sturdy, well-built lot, these warriors, but not a bit superior to our south countrymen, and certainly a much uglier crowd, and for what of the lingo they spoke we could understand they might have been foreigners.

From Alnwick we started early the next morning for Warkworth and Rothbury. The road leads up and down some stiffish hills for a couple of miles towards the coast, but instead of following it on to Alnmouth, which is being resuscitated after long obscurity, as a holiday resort, we strike through Lesbury and soon come within sight of Warkworth Towers. All this coast used to be a veritable hotbed of smugglers. Boulmer in particular was famous, and there are old fellows who can talk for hours about the exploits of Ruthor Grahamslaw, Jock Melvin, Wull Balmer, Wull Faa, of Kirkyetholm, and Laird Cranstoun, and other desperadoes from Roxburghshire as well as from Bamborough, Glendale and Coquetdale, and who still guffaw at the manner in which Alley Geggie and Bob Purvis cheated the red-coats.

We arrive at Warkworth just as the country folk are arriving from distant parts in large vans for the purpose of going to church—a thoroughly primitive proceeding characteristic of this old-world region.

Of all the castles in this country of castles perhaps none are more picturesquely and grandly situated than Warkworth, one of the favourite Percy strongholds. The keep is still perfect and in use, the remainder is in ruin—but such magnificent ruin! Walls forty feet high; towers embellished with quaint heraldic carving; arches, columns, delicately-worked windows, dungeons, gateways and around all, stretching far as eye can reach, as fair a prospect

as can be seen anywhere in England, only to our mind surpassed by the views from the Round Tower at Windsor and from Belted Will's Tower at Naworth. Below the castle, on the western side, runs the beautiful river Coquet, from the banks of which the best sketch of the castle is obtainable, and hither we descend on our road due west towards Rothbury.

On the way we visit the spot made famous by Percy's ballad of the "Hermit of Warkworth," a lovely retreat almost hidden in luxuriant foliage and close to the river, consisting of a small chapel containing an altar and the recumbent effigy of a female, and an inner apartment evidently used by the hermit as a bedroom. Joined here by half a dozen young Northumbrian gentlemen, like ourselves on the tramp, we eschew high roads and keep to fields and woods as much as possible; pausing at a tempting spot, where the water runs deep, for a swim, and as each ten minutes unfolds a fresh scene of beauty, confirming the enthusiasm of our companions for their native river, and applauding to the echo the recitation by one of them, of Thomas Doubleday's famous ballad, ending:

" 'Tis there I'd fauld the weary wing,
There gaze my latest gaze;
Content to see thee once again,
Then sleep beside thy braes."

At Felton Bridge we separate and pursue our way through thick plantations, along shaded lanes, always with the music of the dark river in our ears, past grand old Jacobean manor houses, mostly fallen from their high estate and used as farms, to Weldon Bridge. At the inn here we meet a party of the Newcastle holiday makers who annually swarm to Warkworth for the sake of its fine air and sea-bathing; they are driving, and are not to be persuaded into the belief that there can be much pleasure in tramping during hot weather. The road from here runs just above the river, and the scenery on either side is beautiful in the extreme, the foliage being grander and thicker than any we have yet seen in Northumberland—so grand and so thick, indeed, that we actually miss one of the chief objects of this part of our walk, Brinkburn Priory. We are only doing, however, what was done by a party of marauding Scots centuries ago. They, with an eye to Brinkburn plate and good cheer, sought vainly for the Priory, and turned away in disgust. But the monks, overjoyed at this escape, set to ringing their bells, so that the Scots returned, and, guided by the sound, worked their will on the foundation. Close by Brinkburn, the eastern branch of Watling Street, known as the Devil's Causeway, crosses the river, and it is said that at low water the piers of the Roman bridge may be seen. It is needless to say that, having lost the Priory, we did not find the bridge.

The road winds on, up and down hill; we pass under Cragside,

the magnificent new house of Sir William Armstrong, and, at a distance of about twenty-four miles from Alnwick, enter Rothbury, in Redesdale. The character of few places has changed so much during so short a period of time as has that of Rothbury. Even so late as 1825 we are told that the principal occupations of the inhabitants were poaching, drinking, gambling and fighting—gambling especially. There were four annual orgies known under the pleasant name of “fairs.” On Shrove Tuesday football was played in the streets, and all males above the age of eight who could walk to the place of “kick off,” were obliged to join in what invariably ended in a free fight.

Rothbury has for long been famous as a health resort, and, during the summer season, accommodation is difficult to be had. Formerly valetudinarians came to drink whey and goat’s milk from all parts of the North; now they patronize the exceptionally pure water or the very excellent beer.

Rothbury was a great centre of the old Northumbrian pipe minstrelsy, and the small black and white check tartan worn by the Duke of Northumberland’s pipers, known as the Tosson plaid, is still made here—specimens of it being for sale in the coffee-rooms of all the hotels. Jamie Allan, the prince of Northumbrian pipers, was born at Hepple, near Rothbury, and William Green, the present piper to the Duke, lives at Rothbury. It should be borne in mind that the Northumbrian pipe—known as the small pipe—is an entirely distinct instrument from the Scottish bagpipe, and to confound the two would move the utmost ire and contempt of the Coquetside or Tynedale man.

We leave our pleasant quarters at the “Queen’s Head” early, for our last day’s march in Northumberland, after a consultation with Mr. “Dippie” Dixon, a local antiquary of more than local fame. A week might be most pleasantly spent in exploring the innumerable beautiful and interesting places about Rothbury, and we would recommend explorers to do so unless they are pressed for time, whilst the excellence of the angling near Rothbury is almost proverbial, and enthusiasts flock hither from all parts of the kingdom.

Our road lies past the fine old church, across the bridge, past the vicarage, which was once a Border fortress, through a plantation, and straight up on to the sweet-scented, wild, fresh fells. On the summit of these fells, around what is known as the Camp Hill, are the very interesting remains of what must have in British times been something more than a mere village: scattered about in what the eye soon discerns to be regular order are lines of huge stones, inclosing circles of massive masonry, the whole taking in the entire hill top and much of the southern slope. These lines form what must have been defences of great strength, and we believe that a systematic examination and excavation would produce valuable and interesting results.

We descend the fells, startling innumerable grouse from the thick fern and heather, and make in a south-easterly direction towards Nether Whitton. At Forest Burn gate there is an inn at which the non-abstainer had best halt, for he will get nothing stronger than lemonade between here and Morpeth.

Hence the road is utterly deserted and as bad as a road can possibly be, being, in fact, a mere cart-way over miles of grazing land.

Nether Whitton, where there is a temperance inn, is a very pretty little village, with a picturesque bridge and a fine, sturdy old manor-house. Just beyond the bridge Watling Street crosses our road, but after a minute examination we could not detect a trace of it, and pursued our way by a pretty, wooded road which runs by the side of the pleasant, noisy little Font river, towards Morpeth.

The "famous little town" of Morpeth, as old Camden calls it, does not present many features of interest, and has undoubtedly waned in importance since the transfer of its once famous cattle market to Newcastle. The church is picturesquely situated, and is remarkable for its east window, which exactly resembles the famous west window in the beautiful church of Houghton-le-Spring, on the road between Sunderland and Durham. There we bring our tramp to an end; but, having discarded our knapsacks, go for a very pleasant ramble along the Wansbeck river, by St. Catharine's Well to the Lady Chapel, an interesting ruin which is under process of partial restoration, on to the Lady's Well, the scene of the old ballad of "Bartram's Dirge," or rather the burial place of the hero; by an exquisite piece of typical Northumbrian river scenery to Old Bothal Mill, and on to Bothal Castle, the ancient seat of the Ogles, and once the residence of that chivalrous Marquis of Newcastle whose white-coated Northumbrian regiment so distinguished itself at Marston Moor.

Summing up, we may say that our exploration was delightful from every point of view. Where the historical and antiquarian interest pauses, the gap is filled by the most romantic and beautiful scenery; the country folk everywhere are kind-hearted and courteous; the inns are clean, comfortable and moderate. But, as there are no sign-posts and the country is thinly populated, a pocket compass is almost a necessity, and we undoubtedly swelled the total of miles walked during the eight days to one hundred and seventy-seven from the want of this instrument. Nor must a word of gratitude be omitted to the Northumbrian gentlemen we met at various places, whom we found without exception to be thoroughly well up in the history, the romance, the legendary and antiquarian lore of their county, and who were always ready to show us southrons whatever was to be seen, no matter at what inconvenience.

FRANK ABELL.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DAY IN THE COUNTRY.

"Knoll End, Epping Forest,
"August, 187—.

"DEAR MRS. ROMNEY,—

"Come for two nights, if you won't give us more. My husband will meet you at Liverpool Street and escort you down. How he snatched at the excuse for running up to London! If only he always waited for such a good one. Only five times there and back in our first week. He returns to the Albatross like a murderer to the place of his crime, I tell him. Now don't back out, but come, like the good girl that you are. I've a jewel of a maid, Jenny, who adores children, and you must treat her to the care of yours whilst you are here. It's lovely weather for sitting out in the Forest."

So far Louisa Graves. She would take no refusal. My health and spirits needed a change, she thought. A delicate, sociable woman whose husband *will* spend most of his holiday on the rail, needs and will snatch at a little female companionship, thought I. And one fine afternoon, leaving Tiger and Lal Roy in charge of The Chestnuts, we started on our most flying outing.

Delicious, as the train shot beyond the suburbs, was the first sight of the summer country, after long months pent up in town—like breaking into a new world, the world of natural life and beauty and freshness and freedom. Jack, posted before the door, was absorbed in the self-imposed task of counting the cows in the meadows. Monty, on his feet on the seat, seemed planning a flying leap out of the window when no one was looking.

"Steady, my man!" growled Beattie Graves, gripping the child's petticoats with one hand, whilst the other spread out the newspaper from which he was reading aloud an account of a performance by the Slater Company at Malta on their outward voyage. Not every one is to be pitied who is shut off from the beauties of nature. Blue sky, green pastures, and wild roses in bloom, Beattie Graves cared for none of these things, except, perhaps, when cleverly reproduced on the stage.

From the station a couple of miles' drive in an open waggonette brought us to Knoll End, a charming little fine-weather place, the property of an artist now abroad, a bijou cottage on the edge of an unfrequented stretch of wild wood, undefiled by orange-peel, egg shells, torn newspapers, or broken bottles; that is to say, with no public-house anywhere near.

"And that husband of mine," Louisa returned to my admiring comments, "prefers Chingford and High Beech, where you may see him whenever he isn't in town, watching Harry and Tom playing bowls. Horrid man!"

"We must cultivate sympathy for the vulgar, my dear," pleaded the accused. "The anatomy of Harry and Tom is quite as curious a study as that of his Royal Highness or my lord, and repays dramatic representation incomparably better."

Knoll End within was the pink and perfection of prettiness—another page of the holiday tale just begun. Its appointments showed an intelligent attention to creature comforts, rare where more ostentatious luxury is displayed.

"You're glad you came now, aren't you?" said Louisa, watching me triumphantly as I sipped my tea, reclining in one of those wickedly comfortable arm-chairs, expressly designed to promote sloth.

"Very glad," I acquiesced, abandoning myself to the restful charm of the change. It was like sailing into a fair haven, indeed, to come here to halt, draw breath, taste sunshine, feel a strong awakening of that relish of life for life's sake which dies hard in all young living things. Merely to sit down, relax, be idle, and let myself be waited on was a rare treat. I was strictly forbidden to stir my little finger to help myself or others.

Tea and bed for the children, whom the philo-progenitive Jenny bade fair most egregiously to spoil; then at eight we three sat down to an elaborate little dinner in the smallest space between four walls that ever styled itself a dining-room.

"We managed to seat ten here the other day," said Louisa, looking about; "but upon my word I can't think how it was done."

"Jenny was here scrubbing all the morning," remarked her husband; "the place does look as if it had shrunk in the washing. Louie, why have they forgotten the hot water for warming the gravy spoon, and the ice for the butter, just to-day when we have company?"

But never was "company" of his less inclined to be hypercritical on his cook and his commissariat than I; it was so long since I had sat down to a dinner with whose antecedents I had had nothing to do!

Talk flowed incessantly. Not till dessert, when we were nibbling cracknels and greengages, did a pause occur. Beattie Graves pulled out his watch and looked across at his wife, saying:

"He can't come now till the nine o'clock train, Louie; brings him here about ten."

"Then he'll have dined in town for certain," Louie returned. "Trust Francis Gifford—trust any man for that."

"Mr. Gifford! is he coming?" I asked with a feeling of baffled surprise.

"We expect him," and she glanced up with veiled curiosity and an innocent, "Didn't you know?"

"I understood you were going to be quite alone," I began. Beattie Graves struck in:

"It's my wife's fault; she never counts Gifford—or rather, privilege is the word. He's a charter to come and go as he likes. Louie finds him such good company, compared to a sorry drone like me, that she will let no chance slip. Oh! he makes a favour of coming, I can tell you."

I fell back silently on my biscuits and fruit, Beattie Graves on his anecdotes. When we rose from table, he said:

"I shall just smoke my way down the road, Louie, as far as the cross ways, meet him, and drive up with him."

Louisa and I settled down in the tiny drawing-room, she on the sofa with her ice wool and tatting. A wood fire burned in the grate, the lattice window swung open, and lamp-light and fire-light played together on the foliage of the fringe of the forest. I sat leaning back in my chair—empty-handed, empty-headed—I seemed scarcely to know myself in this moment of the sudden laying down of the weight of home cares and responsibilities. A soldier come back to home comforts from a campaign in the desert may feel so.

"Yes," my companion spoke carelessly by-and-by, "I forgot to mention about Francis Gifford's coming. I didn't think you would mind."

"I don't; why should I mind?" said I, carelessly also.

"When I wrote first, it was unsettled. Certainly I *am* always glad to see him, because of Beattie. The poor man is miserable without a theatre to go to. But they can take walks in the forest together." After a pause she added, "Mr. Gifford talks of going to Italy, you know, almost immediately."

"And is coming down to pay you a farewell visit," I concluded naturally.

She tatted on continuously, as if in rhythmical accompaniment to a train of thought. By-and-by she let fall confidentially:

"He is a man I'm rather sorry for, do you know?"

"I can't think why," I replied, instinctively put on my guard.

"You mean he is more to be envied than pitied, eh?"

"He has been very successful," I agreed.

"And success hasn't spoilt him," she pursued meditatively; "you don't think it has spoilt him, do you?—no."

"Why are you sorry for him, then?" I replied.

"Because"—she spoke with the quiet assurance of one who has pondered the question—"he, nay, all such men who are attractive to women and dominate them easily, are doomed to be most easily influenced themselves, for good or harm, by the charmers who occupy them; and——" she checked herself, then concluded "Francis Gifford ought to marry. I've told him so. He and I are old friends."

"Can't you find an heiress for him?" I suggested, laughing.

"He has no call to go fortune-hunting," she reminded me. "He can afford to be idle, and if he chose to exert himself he might be wealthy. His family want him to marry, and I fancy he is not disinclined. Now, which of these two faces should you call the prettiest?"

She showed me a cabinet portrait of two girls, sisters obviously, though of contrasting types—the elder dark, gipsy-looking, and picturesque; the younger fair, slim, and angelic—both tall and handsome.

The reigning beauties of Florence, Louisa told me; Rosa and Angela Grandison, English maidens, who had lately there become the bosom friends of Francis Gifford's sisters. Match-making girls these, she put in, as if she never stooped to anything of that sort herself—oh, no!

Before I could decide between Minna and Brenda, the sound of wheels warned her to replace the photograph in the album. Mr. Graves was heard rubbing his hands outside and saying, "Evenings fresh. We've a fire in our camp, just to look at."

The slight prospective embarrassment I felt at an unavoidable reminiscence of Charlotte's violence and random assertions vanished almost before I knew it was there. Everything, everybody was so surprisingly easy and natural. As for Mr. Gifford, he might have been the artist proprietor of Knoll End himself, as he took the chair between the sofa and mine as if he had only just left it. He brought down the last news from London, the latest edition of the evening paper, a diverting account of a fray between a newspaper editor and a peppery author. Beattie Graves brought out macaroons and claret, an excuse for prolonging the vigil. It was past midnight before going to bed was talked of.

"London hours," was the general remark, as at last the host went to lock up his cellaret. Louisa began collecting her work chattels. I walked to the open lattice, leaning out for a draught of the cool night air.

"Is that rain?" asked Louisa from the sofa, as the rippling breeze swept the leaves with a sound like light falling drops.

"No," said I, "there are stars out. It will be fine to-morrow."

"But the dews are heavy. You should not stand there; don't let her, Mr. Gifford."

"You are very incautious," said his voice behind me. He had come up to close the window. Reluctantly I allowed his hand to replace mine on the lattice. For a moment he too stood looking out into the summer wood. The scent of the honey-suckles was intoxicatingly sweet, the soft air like a fairy's caress on your cheek; the monotonous whirr of the fern-owls sounded continuously in the distance.

"It is so pleasant," I sighed, withdrawing my head with an effort, "I could sit here till morning."

Pleasant, again, on waking early from a sound and dreamless sleep, to lie with senses awake, but thoughts not yet stirring, fanned by the cool woodland air floating in at the window. Monty's slumbers were blessedly and unwontedly prolonged, till at eight Jenny came in with the hot water, petitioning as a favour to wash and dress the children. I rose leisurely, dawdled over my toilet, then descended to the breakfast-room, where Messrs. Graves and Gifford, armed with table-napkins, were doing battle with a morning cloud of wasps.

Louisa was bent on making that day a whole holiday for me. "You've given us only a few hours," she said. "I intend you to devote them all to me. Let Jenny look after the youngsters, whilst we sit out and enjoy ourselves."

Jenny took the youngsters into the wood, where they spent hours in the new and enchanting pastime of collecting fir-cones. It was too hot for walking. We four sat out under the trees in the copse, and it seemed afternoon almost before morning had begun, and yet half a year since, yesterday, I gave Lal Roy the keys and instructions. And something Charlotte had said about life moving on sometimes at increased speed flitted through my head, idly and unheeded.

After lunch the gentlemen went for a walk—"Directly they're out of sight," prophesied Louisa, "they'll sit down, loll and smoke for two hours, then reappear and pretend to have been to High Beech." At all events they started with good and far-reaching intentions, and it wasn't for us to talk of idling, who had passed the life-long day thus in the shade. The little people at their sports within earshot came running every now and again to report their latest discovery in natural history. My mood was as childish as theirs. I could have regarded the world as bounded by that wood, life by that day. But Louisa, usually given to dwell on the theme of her own domestic affairs, to-day would perversely harp unceasingly on mine. I must tell her what there was to tell, of my just-affected reconciliation with my father-in-law; draw for her the little map of my near future, in its clear and simple outline. Material obstacles were smoothed away. I was in correspondence with the family at the Mote. One sister had written, the mother and other sisters had sent kind messages. It was down in black and white that they would be glad to see me and my children at

the Mote whenever it should be convenient to me to make the journey.

The cordiality with which in the first flush of gratitude I spoke of Mr. Sherwood Romney, brought to Louisa Graves' lips the light ironical smile she had caught from her husband.

"I don't see what he's done for you, so far, or what you owe him," she said plainly.

"Well, his approval of me for a daughter-in-law, in the first place."

"Approval won't feed, clothe, and educate your children," she retorted. "You're obliged for very little, it strikes me."

"We were pained by his displeasure in the past," said I, "and it follows that it is but fair one must be glad of his goodwill. And he offers to help me with money."

"You had more than one friend who would have done that."

"I know; it's not the pounds, shillings, and pence, but the proof that he's reversed his opinion of me as unworthy to have the care of his son's children."

Louisa Graves threw back her head and pursed up her pretty finikin mouth:

"How modest we are! Well, I'm glad he's come round and made friends, since you're glad."

"It will mostly be friends at a distance," I remarked. "For one thing, when I've my country cottage and am settled, I sha'n't be free to move about." She interposed with a quick gesture of impatience:

"You are really going to bury yourself in the backwoods."

Here Jack and Monty came racing to present me with their last "find," a snail-shell of signal beauty, then dashed back into the underwood, where their merry clatter and shrieks of delight seemed to point my reply.

"Poor children in the country are much better off than poor children in town, everybody knows. I'm thinking of that."

"Why of that only? Think a moment of yourself. How shall you bear it?"

"I have borne the last ten months," I said. "I suppose I need not fear the years to come;" but I spoke more bravely than I felt.

"Have you taken a vow of self-immolation?" she asked; "to be nurse, mother, and bread-winner all in one—bound yourself at five-and-twenty to be the slave of care for the best part of your life?"

"As we shall always be poor," I said, "it may be so."

"Why must you always be poor?"

"Because when I married we had only our heads and our hands to trust to. It has fallen to me to fulfil the whole trust. I want those two little lives to come to good—I don't say to high

fortune; I'm not a man, to bring that about; but for the other, I can do more perhaps than a man could."

Louisa, tatting fast and furiously, seemed preparing some significant retort. She murmured something inaudible to herself, something about suttee, when the two gentlemen emerged from the brushwood and broke up our *tête-à-tête*.

"We have been admiring you from a distance," began Beattie Graves; "set our wits competing for poetical similes. I gave in after the first round."

"It would be much more to the purpose," said his wife, "if you would bring out the tea-things. Jenny has the children to attend to."

He complied. A light, portable set-out was made ready in the open, and we were over it still when, half an hour later, Jenny came to announce callers in the drawing-room. Gay, theatrical acquaintance, Louisa hinted, as she joined them within, followed, nothing loth, by her husband. Mr. Gifford and I could hear the sound of voices and laughter, rather loud, in the cottage, which was but a stone's-throw from where we sat out of doors.

"How long does your visit here last?" Thus he broke a few minutes' silence.

"I go home to-morrow."

"So soon as that?"

"I feel something of a spoil-sport here," I said, "a check on their high spirits and sociability. They miss the merrier company they are used to, and as I can't stay and share it, it is better to go."

"It is a pity," he said, "for you look so much better for this one day's rest and change."

I could believe it. I smiled. "Yes, it is pleasant."

As the time shrank, the little remnant seemed to grow pleasanter and more precious. The scent of the firs, the pretty piping of the birds, drowsy humming of the bees in the thyme underfoot, became more keenly, absurdly delicious.

The sun, creeping round, came and shone full into my companion's eyes. He shifted his position, coming to recline on the mossy stump of a tree, near the foot of the alder, where I was seated. "So pleasant," I went on, "that if I stayed, I should soon forget all about the work-a-day world, and newspapers, and editors waiting for letters from their lady correspondents."

He heard with frank impatience. "As for that, I should like to see you throw it over at once and for ever."

"Not yet," I pleaded, piqued by the contemptuous deprecation of his tone into adding, "It was you made me believe I could do it fairly well. If it wasn't true, it's not worth undeceiving me now, as the end is coming soon—perhaps sooner than I expected."

He asked why. I explained:

"My path is getting clearer—even those dreadful money

questions seem easier to answer. Mr. Sherwood Romney and his people are behaving in a friendly manner; they will both countenance and forward my little venture."

"So you still hold to your plan?"

"Why not?" It was vexing that he would laugh at what I was going to set about in good earnest. "Where there's a will there's a way," I continued; "or do you think it is only for men that the proverb holds good?"

"Not at all," he assured me. "The only difficulty is to go on willing or wishing." He paused, then added inquiringly, "You still do desire it?"

"Yes," was my answer—brief, dry, and conclusive, I thought, but he persisted, nevertheless.

"Sometimes what at a distance seemed worth struggling for looks otherwise when the struggle has brought us within its reach."

The shot had hit the mark. It was depression, not elation, that I felt gaining hold on me as I got nearer the goal, and could let fall, one by one, the weapons of combat. But that was my secret, so far as I knew.

"Don't tell me to despond," I said, forcing a cheerful tone. "I should like to think—you might let me think—that when I am settled, busy, successful in my little way, I shall be——"

"Happy?" I could not say it. He did; but his tone sounded like a challenge to my assertion. He stood leaning against the stem of the alder, at the foot of which I sat, looking straight down into my startled eyes as I raised them—as though he would see through my fine show of fortitude into whatever it might hide of a contrary nature.

The breeze swayed the twigs and shook the aspen foliage overhead. I was not much stronger than one of those leaves, and could not trust myself to speak or to stir, with nerves thus trembling. But silence, too, was oppressive and agitating. Then just as, after dreaming a whole history, you wake to find you have been asleep only a minute, I seemed to have been watching for ever so long the motions of that little robin hopping near, and the squirrel peeping round from behind the fir-tree. Instinctively searching about for some commonplace thing to bring me to myself, my eye fell on the tea-service.

"Jenny has forgotten to take those things indoors," I said. "Yet I think the company must be gone now;" and I rose and busied myself with the tray and cups. Mr. Gifford stood watching me for a moment. Then just as I was going to carry them off, our positions were somehow reversed. With gentle insistence the tray was taken out of my hands, and I forced to resume my seat under the drooping white poplar.

"I will take them across," he said, "and come back and tell you if the visitors have left."

For one minute I was alone; my face sunk in my hands. I was staring, in curious abstraction, at a little blue flower in the grass close under my eyes, gazing into the petals of its tiny cup, with its little leaflets and violet veins, as intently as if into some fairy grass that shows you a whole phantasmagoria.

A minute only; then I rose with a start and hastened across to the cottage, meeting Mr. Gifford at the door. The callers had been gone for some time. "Louie and I got talking," said Beattie Graves, as we joined them indoors, "quarrelling, in fact. How time flies then, to be sure!"

That evening sped pleasantly as the last. After dinner we drove out in the forest. Mr. Gifford mentioned that he was going to drive back to London to-morrow. Half jokingly, it was suggested he should drive me and the children, an offer I treated as a joke.

At night, when we separated, Louisa Graves came to me in my room. She was dying, she said, to know how I "did" my hair. I had promised to show her how, and now made a commencement by taking it down.

"Now, must you really go to-morrow?" she began, as I drew out the pins.

"I would rather," said I. "There—I divide it into four, do you see? I take this piece first, and roll it—so."

"Why wouldn't you let him drive you?" she demanded next.

"I had several reasons. I twist it into a knot—see? and then wind the remainder round and round, piece by piece—it's as simple as A B C."

"Reasons? Yes, I know—Jack's cold, your return tickets, etcetera. But your real reason?"

"I am so much alone," I said diffidently, "I have to be careful."

"And you think Francis Gifford a dangerous trifler?"

"He has that character."

"Tell me seriously—have you any fault to find with his behaviour at any time towards yourself?"

"I don't say so."

"There!" she pinned me down. "Judge a man as you find him. In any case, don't trust to the testimony of some wild, jealous woman."

"Not if she has the right to be jealous?"

"She can't," Louisa insisted. "My dear!"—and the comic irony of her expression made her look more like her husband than ever—"the world will have to be created over again if men of the world, like Francis Gifford, are to be expected to draw back from the advances of those who, whether in or out of society, don't regard social laws as applicable to themselves. An infatuation on the one hand, very briefly reciprocated, I should say, on the other You conclude he can have no power of constancy in his

nature. Wait till he is enamoured of some one who deserves his esteem."

"But I don't see him set much store by the so-called estimable qualities," I answered her. "He is attracted by what is brilliant—difficult to win."

"You're mistaken," she replied with some warmth. "If he has no very high opinion of women, as is probable, it is because he takes them as, I suspect, he has found them—charming, adorable, unaccountable, despicable creatures it is easy to worship, but impossible to worship for long. This proves nothing—certainly not that he is incapable of deserving the love of his wife, when he marries."

She stopped; then resumed significantly, more gravely than usual:

"How if it had struck me that now first he had given his personal admiration to some one he is bound to respect?"

I looked at her aghast, staggered, suddenly horrified at heart.

"You too!" I sighed confusedly. "Why will you all say it? He has no such thought, I am sure."

"He would consider it an impertinence to speak of it to you as yet," she returned soothingly. "You need not fear, nor yet resent his admiration. It is no crime, I hope, to admire you, my dear girl. Everybody must. As to Beattie—but I know you don't care to hear your face praised. Francis Gifford's behaviour should have proved to you that he can admire your other qualities besides."

I was silent, unconvinced. She persisted insinuatingly:

"He is coming to see you at The Chestnuts to-morrow, before starting for the continent. Now must you let him go away among fresh scenes and new circles without word or sign to show that you appreciate his feeling towards you and the consideration that alone keeps him silent—that is, if you do appreciate them?"

"I cannot tell you how it is with me," said I sadly, but with a gentler feeling. "Since James—whom I loved—died, I have taken the way that lay straight before me, worked on, lived on, and now and then been happy. But such happiness sprang from what linked itself with the past, not with sharp breaking away from it."

"You are young; your life is only beginning," she declared.

I caught her up. For a moment I saw clear in myself.

"You will tell me I may change, may become another person. It is possible. But I cannot help it if I am—that is, if I want to be—myself still."

"Don't cry," she said—for I was crying, laughing at once. She embraced me kindly and left me to my slumbers, less tranquil, less happy than those of last night.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

YES OR NO ?

THE least incidents of the morning after our return to The Chestnuts remain as if burnt into my memory, though had the last half of that day made a clean sweep of the memory of the first, there would have been no marvel. Nay—for it did so, then later everything came back with curious clearness, down to the minutest particulars.

Monty woke me at four in the morning, clamouring to be dressed to go out. I had to take him out of his cot and coax him to lie still in my arms, where he nestled contentedly, telling incomprehensible stories to himself, and singing like the sparrows in the ivy, till he tumbled into a nap at last, whilst I lay wakeful and thinking.

Thinking I was glad to be back home; glad to have broken the spell of a holiday almost before it was cast. Back to the old hard lines, the little household rubs, the children's wants, the myriad cares we call sweet, of a mother's life, but which have many faces, some of them sour.

Yet the little outing had done me good. It was months since I had seen so much pink in my cheeks as this morning, or felt so refreshed by sleep, so ready for breakfast.

Morning light, too, brought the plausible conviction that Louisa Graves had probably been romancing that last evening, misled by the match-making propensity inherent in all true women. I would not for anything that Mr. Gifford should suspect me of so misinterpreting his kindness, if he came to-day, as he had said he would, on some technical matters relating to *Out of Town*, with which his connection was about to cease.

That was the hottest day of the year. Going round in the forenoon to a tradesman or two, I found streets and roads deserted. Half the private houses were shut up, pleasure and business alike seemed brought to a full-stop by the height of the temperature. Even the shopboys were too overcome to tie up their parcels properly, and as I, with Jack for my little henchman, reached the lodge gates of The Chestnuts the string of the packet he insisted on carrying came off, and all the rice was strewn over the pavement, to my dismay and his inextinguishable laughter.

I doubt if even Beattie Graves came up to town that day. Lal Roy, like a true son of the south, was in a state of collapse, beside which our British activity seemed almost unabated. Kitchen, garden, sitting-room, nursery—there was a good morning's work for me in each. I gave orders and lessons, cast accounts, inspected, read and answered letters with clock-like precision, to make up for the slackening of zest within.

It was early in the afternoon when, from the garden, I saw Mr. Gifford walk up to the front door. The children were on the lawn blowing soap-bubbles. "Mrs. Gardener" had brought out her sewing, and leaving her to sit with them till they were tired of the sport, I went in to my visitor. It was cooler in the sitting-room than outside. All the doors were set open—so many traps to catch a breath of air; the front door itself, the sliding doors between sitting-room and lobby were pushed back—only a *portière* curtain hung over the aperture. Quite unconstrainedly we shook hands. I felt ashamed of having lent heed to Louisa's foolish talk, after some little while spent in discussing certain prosy business details connected with my work, for which he held himself sponsor—and now gave me his parting advice and criticism. Henceforward I must get on without them.

"And so you leave England to-night?" I said presently, as he alluded to his journey. "Jack, Monty and I shall really be the only people left in town. Even the greengrocer is on the Rhine, and the baker and his family went yachting in Scotland a week ago."

He was silent, then remarked contemplatively:

"You have The Chestnuts till Christmas, have you not?"

"Yes, but our move may come earlier. Only this morning I heard of something in Surrey which I think may suit me." He looked puzzled and inquiring, so I added, in explanation:

"A cottage, in a promising situation for my scheme. Not a holiday nook, like Knoll End; but the last owner managed to carry on a remunerative industry." His half-smile, letting out that he was still amusing himself inwardly at the expense of my poor prospects, led me to begin puffing them, like an auctioneer:

"There is a market-town close by, with a growing demand for fruit and vegetables and dairy produce, and an excellent grammar school, to which Jack shall go when he is old enough. I must go down and see the place. If it will do, we might be settled before Christmas."

"It is an experiment——" he began hesitatingly.

"Which," I continued cheerfully, "I am indebted to you for being able to try. When I go—but not till then, please—I shall give up the work that you found for me to do."

"If the decision rested with me," he said suddenly, "you should never write another line," adding, as in half-apology, but convincingly, "You have much too much upon your hands."

"Not more than most women who are mothers. And I am strong and well; better able than most to do the work that needs must be done."

"But if there were no need," he interposed gently, "no 'must' in the matter?"

I shook my head faintly, instinctively. He gave me no time to frame a thought, much less a reply.

"It is a wretched life," he exclaimed, "you have led it too long. No one who cares for you could approve its continuance for another day."

He spoke almost violently. I, too, was strangely moved, in part by his earnest, in part by the conflicting emotions stirred, that drew from me the reply:

"It is not wretched to me," and I spoke from my heart, with pain, but very sincerely. "It is the outcome of a happiness ended, to my sorrow; but its legacy of care is a sacred trust, and the task is welcome because of that from which it sprung."

"It is sweet and womanly of you to think so," he returned, in ready answer to the protest, as if he had anticipated it word for word, "but the task may be beyond your endurance." He paused, and his tone took another inflection as he said persuasively, "Your friends see it, who would make life pleasant to you—if you—if you would let them try."

"No, no," I said hastily, blankly, shaken by a sense no longer to be shunned of what was in his mind. And a threatening inclination to yield to these urgings to lay down my armour and abandon myself to the promptings, true or false, of the moment threw me into painful confusion and sickening self-mistrust. To speak or think steadily was a strain; my impressions were blurred, my manner was hurried and incoherent.

"For how long will you forbid them?" there was a new ring in his voice, as of rising confidence. I buried my face in my hands a moment.

"God help me!" The words, though unuttered, sounded in my ears—my heart's prayer to see clearly into itself, though my head should wander now that all seemed calling loudly on me to tear myself from that love-memory they call a dream.

A dream, but of something not a dream—something so pure, so sweet, so true, and that had grown so strong that it filled me still, and held me then as fast and as passionately as though James were there with his arms round me—face to face again, he and I. And the past seemed to become real again, the present to fade, mirage-like, in that moment of vivid remembrance and strange and hopeless longing.

Instinctively I rose and moved to the window, leaning on the sill, looking at Jack and Monty, still puffing away at their rainbow bubbles, Tiger snapping at the air balls as they floated his way. My heart was throbbing violently, my head felt dazed. I heard, as in a dream, the children's distant voices; then Francis Gifford's, close by, asking if I was faint—I had turned so white.

"It is nothing," I said, and my voice was quite changed and dulled. "I am not so strong as I was, and living in this strange little lonely house I get nervous and frightened sometimes by my own thoughts and recollections, like sick people, who see faces and hear voices that are not there."

"Memory is food to starve upon," he urged, "not to live."

"That depends," said I, "on the worth of the thing remembered."

"You loved your husband so much?" he responded, freely and naturally, with a sort of ingratiating sympathy, like some one feeling his way in the dusk.

"Did you not know it?" said I, with a sudden chill at heart. "Yes, we loved each other better than any human thing. And now I am groping my way on alone; when it seems dark, I fancy his hand—his dead hand—is guiding me still; it has not let mine go."

His countenance had changed; he spoke presently in a tone of grave warning:

"The solitude and melancholy of this place are preying on your nerves, and, what is worst of all, leading you to trifle with thoughts perilous to reason."

I could not deny it at that particular moment.

"Do not let that happen," he urged again with frank solicitude; "it is not right. It was better at Knoll End. Our friends there repent having let you go, and I have a mission from them to try and persuade you to return there for a while. Let me put off my journey and bring you back to them to-morrow, or when you will."

"I cannot go to Knoll End," I said; "my place is here."

"Alone?" he asked, and his tone rang with sudden penetrating passion; "to forget what enjoyment is like, what life has to give—that you might learn to love again, as you are loved."

"Alone," I repeated impassively. "But I am not alone. I do not feel so, as I said."

He was watching me intently, but half persuaded still that my firmness was not a mask. I was in fear of myself at this moment, of some last appeal on his part, some attempt to drown compunction and deaden my heart's desire to abide by what I had said. It drew from me a look of appealing entreaty to him not to make it. He seemed touched at something, his eyes fell, his countenance was violently stirred as by contradictory motive impulses, but the feeling was good that kept him silent, until by-and-by he spoke, differently, distantly almost:

"Well, you will write to Knoll End," he said, "and tell them your resolution was unalterable?"

I gave a mute assent, and he rose, saying:

"Whilst I have to wish you good fortune and good-bye."

I silently gave him my hand. For an instant it was retained, with a lingering pressure; his eyes betrayed that he half regretted his forbearance just now, and that loitering half-doubt of my sincerity. I withdrew my hand gently, and stood quite silent and still, not without a pang of self-reproach at so cold and ungrateful a leave-taking—a poor return for kind acts! But there, it

was over; he was gone, and I left standing there in the middle of the room, alone.

"Not alone!" my words came echoing back, like a taunt. They sounded well, but they were not true. I had prayed to be alone, and I was. I had no after-thought of recanting now. Had Francis Gifford come back, I must have spoken as before, only more heartily. I had appealed to memory to help me—the memories I had locked away till I should be stronger. I had called them and they came; like a sea bringing bits of wreckage from the foundered ship, here a jewel, there a homely trifle or two—a sail, a toy—each with its story—reminiscences of sweet things said, of funny things, grave things, and things of no moment, the jetsam and flotsam of the life we had not been allowed to live out together.

I had fallen back into the chair by the window, forgetting where I was, or what I was doing, in the stress of a strong mental excitement that forced the words out of me aloud:

"James, they want me to begin another life—they do not know—You and your love have made mine what it is; I shall not find anything like them in the world. Oh! my dear, this poor little life, I would not change it for one of pleasure—I cannot listen to the thought that calls on me to try and forget you."

(To be continued.)

MY QUEEN.

SHE will come not in fancy olden,
 When Aurora in the North
 Frets the heavens in reddened golden
 Ere the day has issued forth.
 She will come not when idle dreaming
 Visions chariots of Love
 Drawn by silver-white traces streaming
 From the pinions of a dove.

She will come when the sickle golden
 Has gathered a few more years;
 When true faith has learnt to embolden
 Hope, and to lessen fears.
 She will come, no white pinions streaming
 O'er love's well-trodden way;
 We shall meet—and cease all the dreaming.
 When the Real holds the sway.

H. CATTERSON-SMITH.

ST. ALBAN HALL, OXFORD.

AS an old alumnus of St. Alban Hall, which now exists no longer, having been merged into Merton College, I have written down some few recollections of the old place, as it may be interesting to your readers.

Well, then, an Oxford gazetteer, about 150 years old, tells us that Alban Hall received its name from Robert Abbot de St. Albans, an Oxford citizen, who conveyed the tenement to the nuns of Littlemore in Oxfordshire, A.D. 1239, in King Henry III.'s reign. I presume since that date it has always been a place of education connected with the University of Oxford. But King Henry VIII., some three centuries after, gave the hall to Dr. George Owen, fellow of Merton College. He conveyed it to Sir John Williams and Sir John Gresham, and they, by permission of Edward VI. in 1547, assigned it over to John Pollard and Robert Pond, Esqrs., who transferred it to the warden and fellows of Merton, to whom, my gazetteer of 150 years ago says, it still belongs.

There is a continuous list of principals, commencing with Robert Morris, A.M., A.D. 1437. The last principal, appointed in 1861, is still living; he gave up the principalship a few years ago, and he now receives a pension from Merton College.

Among the more remarkable men who governed this society may be mentioned Richard Fitzjames, Bishop of London; Robert Huyck, physician to Queen Elizabeth; Narcissus Marsh, Lord Primate of Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh.

In later times Alban Hall has had for principals Peter Elmsley, the great Greek scholar, and Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. Among the vice-principals there have been Dr. Hinds, Bishop of Norwich, and John Henry Newman, who is now a cardinal of the Church of Rome.

My connection with St. Alban Hall commenced in 1838. Dr. Cardwell, professor of ancient history, was principal, and the Rev. Henry Wall, vice-principal. Mr. Wall afterwards became fellow of Balliol and professor of logic. There were only seven undergraduates in my first term; they afterwards became more numerous, but there were never more than a dozen in residence in my time. One reason of the small number was that Dr. Cardwell would not, like his predecessors, receive men from other colleges. In one term, soon after Dr. Cardwell's appointment, there was

only one undergraduate in residence. His name, strange to say, was Tenant; he was called "the solitary tenant of Alban Hall."

I will now give a few recollections of my undergraduate days from 1838 to 1842. The vice-chancellor who matriculated me was Dr. Gilbert, principal of Brasenose. He was a very handsome man, and he afterwards became Bishop of Chichester. He had a very large family, all of whom but two were daughters; one of his daughters was blind. The two first proctors I remember were the Rev. W. Ricketts, fellow of Merton, and the Rev. T. T. Bazeley, fellow of Brasenose. The vicar of St. Mary's, the university church, was the celebrated John Henry Newman; the vicar of St. Peter's-in-the-East was the Rev. W. K. Hamilton, who afterwards became Bishop of Salisbury. My rooms were on the ground floor facing Merton Street and next to Merton College. The staff of servants were the cook, the manciple, the porter, and a boy. The cook and manciple were husband and wife. Having no chapel we had prayers in the hall once on a week day and twice on the Sunday. On one Sunday in each term we went to St. Peter's-in-the-East to Holy Communion. Our sole tutor was the vice-principal; the principal, however, lectured on divinity. In Lent term, 1840, I passed responsions; the two examiners before whom I appeared were Mr. Jelf, of Christ Church, and Mr. Henry, of Pembroke. In Michaelmas term, 1841, I passed the final examination. My three examiners were Dayne, Tait, and Donkin. Tait became at last Archbishop of Canterbury. The number of undergraduates in 1838 was much fewer than they are now. At New College there are now more than 200 undergraduates. I doubt much if there was one tenth of that number in 1838. At New College, Magdalen, and Corpus there were no commoners, and at Merton there were not above ten; twenty-six, including scholars, formed the whole number under instruction.

There was a cricket ground on Cowley Marsh, and another on Bullingdon Green, but there was no football, no tram-cars and no omnibuses. If we wanted to go home by coach at the end of term, it was necessary to book our places at least a week beforehand. The coaches were well horsed and very fast. One used to go by the Henley Road, 58 miles to London, in five and a quarter hours. Boating was a favourite amusement then as it is now, but the pace has much increased. The chief inn at Oxford was the "Angel." It is now pulled down and the new schools are built on its site. The "Mitre" still exists, as does also the "Star," but this last has changed its name; it is now called the "Clarendon." At St. Mary Hall, Dr. Hampden was the principal. He did not, however, take much part in its management as he lived at Christ Church, where he was a canon and regius professor of divinity. He left it all to the Rev. W. H. Cox, the vice-principal, who was also Rector of Carfax.

At St. Edmund Hall, Dr. Grays, the principal, left all to the Rev. John Hill, the vice-principal, a well-known Evangelical clergyman, who, like Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, did much to promote religion among the undergraduates. Mr. Hill, whose residence was 65, High Street, had been a long time vice-principal, and was the immediate successor of Daniel Wilson, who was afterwards Bishop of Calcutta.

At Magdalen Hall, Dr. Macbride, the principal, like Dr. Cardwell, attended to the religious instruction of his pupils. He was a layman, as well also as Dr. Marsham, the warden of Merton. The vice-principal of Magdalen Hall was Mr. Jacobson, who afterwards became regius professor of divinity and at last Bishop of Chester; Dr. Hampden, of St. Mary Hall, became Bishop of Hereford.

The principal of New Inn Hall was Dr. Cramer, who died Dean of Carlisle. He had no vice-principal when I was an undergraduate. Having been a student of Christ Church was one reason why men sent away from Christ Church generally entered at New Inn Hall.

I believe that the members of St. Alban Hall were quite as well done for as at any of the others. It was rather an expensive place, the number being so few, and there was no endowment. There is one member and alumnus of Alban Hall whom I should not forget, the late Stephen Reay, B.D., professor of Arabic and senior assistant librarian at the Bodleian. So Alban Hall has this century had the honour of educating the two Professors, Reay and Wall. The other principals and vice-principals received their education at other colleges. There was a blind man a few years before my time who got a second-class. This was a Mr. Seymer, whose sister used to read to him. She came up to Oxford for the purpose. There is an Alban Hall alumnus, a Mr. Kitto, whom the Bishop of London (after he had done a great work in the East End of London for many years) has just presented to the important living of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. He matriculated in 1856. Many of my contemporaries have naturally passed away, perhaps the greater part of them. It has been calculated that on an average an Oxford man lives for 33 years after taking his B.A.

Magdalen Hall is still in existence as Hertford College. Mr. T. C. Baring, M.P., I was told by one of the fellows, has given as much as £200,000 for the endowment of fellowships and scholarships. When we think of this place and of Keble College, we see a good prospect that the work of education will be carried on efficiently as in the days of Wykeham and Wainflete.

St. Edmund Hall will be carried on in connection with Queen's College, who always have appointed the principal, and who will continue to do so.

St. Alban Hall is destroyed because it has no friends. No one was interested in it except the principal, and he has been pen-

sioned off. A new chapel, which was built a few years ago by subscription, is now secularized.

In days gone by, the scholars of Merton, called Postmasters, lived in a tenement called Bean Hall, and had for their principal one of the fellows. Even to this day one of the fellows is styled Principal of the Postmasters. Alban Hall, having both a chapel and a hall, would have been a much more suitable place for the Postmasters to lodge in than Bean Hall. It would then have an existence as St. Edmund Hall has now.

The undergraduates of *St. Alban Hall* in my days were a very friendly body. We all knew one another intimately, as was only likely in such a small community. Breakfasting together so frequently, as well as spending our evenings together, caused us to waste more time than we should have done, but yet it was very pleasant. Our vice-principal used to boast that there had never been a pluck since he had held his appointment. Having never more than twelve pupils to attend to, he could and did for them almost as much service as if he had been a private tutor. I must say that the recollection of our intercourse with each other is very pleasant, and every one of our alumni whom I have come across has always expressed the same opinion. There was none of that party spirit which is so common in undergraduate society. We were there, and were all disposed to make the best of it. The principal was too great a man to interfere in any way, and the vice-principal lived away with his mother and sister. In my time, any one who wished to go in for honours had to take a private tutor. The most popular coach then was Bob Lowe, of Magdalen—the present Lord Sherbrook. Bob might often be met with on the water, pulling a lusty stroke oar while his wife steered. As an examiner he was not so popular; for he was too hasty in his decisions. He afterwards went out to Australia, practised at the Bar there, and when he returned to England, took to politics. This coaching does very well for a few years, but it does not do for a man to make it the business of his life. There was a man named Robertson, of Lincoln, and who had, at one time, a great reputation; but his pupils gradually falling off, and having a wife and family, he had, I fear, much to do to make both ends meet before his death at 70 years of age. Another celebrated coach was the well-known Mr. Hughes, of Trinity. He held a great many offices; he was rector of St. Clement's, chaplain of All Souls, clerk of the market, &c., &c. He was usually called by undergraduates "the fast man's friend," and he was by no means ashamed of the title. He lived and died in Oxford, and lies buried in Holywell Churchyard. He came up from Rugby as captain of the school, got a scholarship at Trinity, then a high honour, but did not obtain a fellowship, as he married, when quite young, a daughter of Mr. Vicary, the organist of Magdalen. He was always applying for various places. In addition to those I have

mentioned he was proctor of the Vice-Chancellor's court, besides holding such places as pro-proctor, master of the schools, select preacher, &c. But for all this, I am sure he would have left his family better off had he got a fellowship at Trinity, and succeeded in time to one of the college livings.

Cardinal Manning was a select preacher before the university in my undergraduate days, and was very much thought of. He was then Archdeacon Manning. He and Samuel Wilberforce, successively Bishop of Oxford and Winchester, married two sisters. Manning, before his marriage, had been fellow of Merton College. Manning's father was head of the firm of Manning and Anderdon, West India merchants, and had been governor of the Bank of England. In my undergraduate days I have heard two men preach before the university who are now cardinals of the Church of Rome. Manning might be thought more of by the junior members, but Newman would be decidedly the favourite with those of longer standing. Pusey was remarkable for very long sermons, he has preached for two hours.

During my undergraduate career I believe there was only one college tutor who was not in holy orders; this was Travers Twiss, of University. At Merton, William Adams, author of "The Shadow of the Cross," was a tutor; at Magdalen, William Palmer, brother of Sir Roundell Palmer, now Lord Selborne. As a public examiner he was thought much of by the undergraduates; he died a member of the Church of Rome. The two censors of Christ Church were Robert Hussey and Jacob Lee; the present Dean Liddell was then one of the junior tutors. But by far the most distinguished college tutor at that date was William Sewell, of Exeter; he had originally been of Merton College; he had one brother a fellow of Magdalen, and another fellow of New College. This last is now warden, and has been vice-chancellor. William Sewell was a great promoter of education. He was a High Churchman, but not altogether in agreement with Pusey and Newman. Sidney Smith said of Sewell, "Thou art *suillus*," *i.e.*, a little pig, because he would not, as the saying is, "go the whole hog." The most remarkable of the heads was Gaisford, Dean of Christ Church. He was regius professor of Greek. The canons at that time were Baines, Dowdeswell, Woodcock, Buckland, Pusey, Bull, Jelf and Hampden. Jelf and Dowdeswell were non-resident. Jelf was in Hanover as tutor to the Crown Prince; Dowdeswell had never resided, I was told. Christ Church was then, as it is now, the chief college; there would, perhaps, be five or six noblemen in residence and perhaps thirty gentlemen commoners. One of these gentlemen commoners was John Ruskin, who gained the Newdigate prize poem, which I heard him recite at Commemoration. He was nearly always to be seen with some female relation, which was rather remarkable at that day, but would not be thought so much of now.

Another remarkable event in my time was the condemnation of Newman's celebrated Tract 90 by the Hebdomadal Board, that is the heads of houses and proctors. This condemnation was procured by the remonstrance of four college tutors—Churton, of Brasenose; Tait, of Balliol; Wilson, of St. John's, and Griffith, of Wadham. Churton, though a good man, was not remarkable; Tait was remarkable for his extraordinary success in life, for he rose to be Archbishop of Canterbury; Wilson took a country living, and would not have been remembered except he had written one of the seven Essays and Reviews, which were so much condemned for their want of orthodoxy; Griffith became Warden of Wadham, and died rich and respected a year or two ago. The vice-chancellor who succeeded Dr. Gilbert was Dr. Wynter, of St. John's. It was Dr. Wynter who suspended for two years Dr. Pusey, on account of a sermon; this was thought rather a high-handed proceeding. The vice-chancellor has no authority beyond the precincts of the university; Dr. Pusey, during those two years, lectured as usual and preached away from Oxford. It was, I think, after I took my degree, I believe in 1844. Dr. Pusey's mother, Lady Lucy Pusey, a widow, lived at Holton Park, near Wheatley. Dr. Pusey's sister married Dr. Cotton, the Provost of Worcester College. Their family seat is at Pusey, in the Vale of White Horn, and they are one of the oldest families in England. Dr. Pusey lost his wife and one daughter when I was an undergraduate. They both are buried in the centre of the cathedral choir, and he now rests near them.

Another celebrated canon of Christ Church is Dr. Buckland, professor of geology, who afterwards became Dean of Westminster. Dean Buckland, like Dean Swift, failed in mind before he failed in body. Their minds were worn out first. This is a sad ending for a great man. Dr. Routh, the president of Magdalen, was another Oxford celebrity, but except at chapel he was rarely seen during the last twenty years of his life. He was president from 1791 to 1854, and died in his 100th year. He is buried at the entrance of his college chapel. Dr. Jenkyns, the master of Balliol, had raised his college to be one of the foremost in the university, though it was not then a very large college. The senior tutor was Frederick Oakley, who afterwards joined the Catholic Church, and was thought much of as an eloquent preacher in Islington. The first time I attended a university sermon, which was on Easter Day, 1838, he was the preacher. I do not think he was much thought of as a preacher while he was at Oxford, but certainly he was a good tutor and examiner. The university sermons were very much better attended in those days than they are now.

Another man of mark was Richard Greswell, tutor of Worcester College. He was not then a fellow because he had married. The head of Worcester was an amiable man, and Dr. Pusey's

brother-in-law. Strange to say, for nobody who knew him in after life would have thought it, he had been when a young man a skilful four-in-hand whip. One coachman in my day had certainly been an undergraduate. He was employed by Coster. A four-in-hand coachman would be as different from a cabdriver as a canon of St. Paul's from a Welsh curate. St. Ebbe's Church had a non-resident rector. There were three curates who did the duty, who had each taken a double first, Charles Baring, of Christ Church, Samuel Waldegrave of All Souls, and Edward A. Litton of Oriel. Baring became Bishop of Durham, and Waldegrave Bishop of Carlisle. I do not suppose there was another parish in England which could say it had three curates who had each taken a double first-class. It was the Bishop of Durham's eldest son who behaved so munificently to Hertford College. We have had one visit from royalty, which I remember; the Queen and Prince Albert came, but I think they stayed at the Archbishop of York's at Nuneham Courtenay. This was perhaps the occasion when the Duke of Wellington came as Chancellor of the University, for I remember him once at Commemoration. He looked a fine old man, though it must have been more than twelve years before his death. I noticed that he wore his cap the hinder part foremost.

Dr. Ingram, the president of Trinity, was a great antiquarian. He published the "Memorials of Oxford." It was at Trinity College where John Henry Newman was a scholar before he became fellow of Oriel. Newman was the son of a Lombard Street banker. Dr. Symons, warden of Wadham, resigned his headship when he was eighty years of age, but he lived to be ninety-five. He had been both proctor and vice-chancellor, as also were the present Rector of Exeter College and the present Dean of Christ Church.

When I first came to Oxford Dr. Shuttleworth was warden of New College. He became Bishop of Chichester, but he did not live long afterwards. His successor at New College was Dr. Williams, who had been head master of Winchester School. He was genial and popular. New College choir in those days had a great reputation. The warden himself could intone the service well.

Magdalen Choir was also thought much of; the cathedral then was very poor, but it has greatly improved since.

The warden of All Souls was the Rev. Lewis Sneyd, M.A. From some cause or other he would not take his D.D. as was usual. When I first knew him he was quite bald, but after the long vacation he appeared with what seemed a fine head of hair. But alas! he, like Major Pendennis, wore an exceedingly well-made wig. He was not married. It was All Souls where Bishop Heber was a fellow. He was an undergraduate of Brazenose, and while there gained the Newdigate prize for English verse.

He recited it at the following Commemoration. The subject was Palestine. Another youth, a B.A. of Edmund Hall, gained the English prose essay. He was Daniel Wilson. The subject was "Common Sense." Both these two became in their time Bishops of Calcutta.

It was a standing joke in the university that the fellows of All Souls were required to be *bene nati, bene vestiti, et moderate docti*. This is true no longer; a candidate for a fellowship is required to have taken a first-class in one school at least, or to have gained a university prize. I have now brought my remarks to a conclusion, but I must express my regret that this little society, which has maintained a respectable existence since 1239, should exist no longer. It is more for the authorities of the university than for a private individual to take the matter in hand. I should rejoice if Alban Hall was resuscitated and revived. I am sure its extinction was not called for, but there was no one to speak up for it. The Chancellor of the University is the visitor of all the halls, and he holds his place in trust for his successor.

HENRY ROBINSON, D.D.

CASES OF CONSCIENCE.

SOMETIMES 'tis hard to judge which course is right,
 Or clearly mark the mist-clad boundaries
 That separate the evil from the good;
 Or where one duty with another blends:
 'Tis hard to tell the moments when the lights
 Of daylight fly, and eve steals o'er the earth—
 Debated ground, betwixt the night and day,
 That may be claimed by either side alike.
 All but stone blind can tell the actual day,
 And easily detect the midnight hour.
 Thus, while we know the blackened shades of crime,
 We stand perplexed before the twilight hues
 Where Good and Evil meet—which now one calls
 Evil; another, good, and some one else
 May neither deem. O give me grace to see
 The Right from Wrong, and, in all doubtful points,
 Keep clear of mists and eve-disguising shades,
 That in Thy Light my eyes the light may see.

RAMLAAL SAHAI;

THE LUXURIOUS PLANTER, THE STERN MAGISTRATE,
AND THE MILD HINDOO.

THE best part of a century has elapsed since the European first started indigo-planting in India, in competition with the native, and since then it has gone on steadily increasing, till now it forms an important industry of the country, and one of the most lucrative fields of investment for British capital. Though extending, English jurisdiction has, in some degree, curtailed the early, almost unlimited, power of the planter, with his corresponding profits; yet more extensive and improved methods of cultivation and manufacture have largely compensated him for the change. Still, however, his power remains greater than can be reconciled with an industry supposed to be voluntary; and still this is carried on by many ways and means peculiar to indigo-planting, which European influence, added to capital, can alone exert in contradistinction to the hand-to-mouth cultivator. From time to time special legislation, in response to the loud outcries of the natives, has been threatened, but for the most part this has been smothered ere ever it took shape, leaving things very much as they were. That indigo cultivation has not yet been put on a more equitable footing as regards the native, and more in keeping with the claims of humanity and justice, and with the royal proclamation, when the government of the country passed from the Company to the Crown, can only be ascribed to the influence indigo-planters as a body wield with the governing element, and, perhaps, the extent to which that element itself is personally interested in the industry.

The indigo plant is cultivated by contract with the tenants in villages leased to the planters by the native landowners. In the framing of these contracts the tenant is as little consulted as he is on the question of signing them. It may therefore be supposed to what side, in point of advantage, they lean. Terms and forms *apparently* fair are inserted, which on English soil would operate, but which there are merely so many plausible phrases to deceive the eye, and of which the natives, by experience, know the full value. The best land in the small croft of each tenant—which he would fain reserve for his own less laborious and more lucrative crops, and his three successive harvests yearly—is then measured out by the planter for indigo. Hard, toilsome work is this indigo

cultivation, incessant from day to day and from year to year, amid hard and equally grinding poverty, harsh treatment in default, and wretched remuneration. Corporal punishment and fines, illegal though they be, still prevail as an active element in the cultivation, but rarely come under the cognizance of the law. The ryot knows full well the power of money, and the side that would ultimately win in the contest. He knows that the full pound of flesh would be exacted of him some day, if not as a *lex talionis* exchange, yet as a warning to others.

Even the law itself, where it forms such an elastic medium either for justice or oppression, avails, unconsciously to its administrators, as one of the most powerful aids to indigo-planting. European magistrates, who desire to administer the law impartially, are beginning more and more to see the necessity of avoiding even the appearance of much intimacy with planters, in consequence of the way such intimacy acts, or is made to act, to serve private ends. A magistrate, for example, may be out at a planter's for a day's shooting at the very time that the planter has in prospect a law case against a native, shortly to come up for hearing in this said magistrate's court, but of which only planter and natives are aware. Simple though the occurrence, it has its due effect in making the natives doubt whether, under such circumstances, an unprejudiced judgment of the said case is likely. To those behind the scenes, however, it is well known that such influences have a greatly deterrent effect upon the native, from making the stand he otherwise might in asserting his rights. On the other hand, the natives are not free of blame for a state of matters of which they themselves become the victims. In India, as in most Oriental countries, money is the great engine employed to influence the course of justice, to a degree, and by ways and means, unknown in more civilized regions, despite all that can be said and done to the contrary. European traders, therefore, find little difficulty in falling in with the familiar institutions of the country which the rupee brings into operation, either as a means of offence or defence. They know the hopelessness of depending on mere truth—even when that happens to be on their side—as a gauge of success in litigation, where a false case stands nearly as good a chance as a true, at least in the native country courts; where, too, any amount of witnesses can be bought for a few rupees prepared to take their solemn oath, with face turned towards the sacred Ganges, to things they have never seen or heard of, and cheerfully to undergo the preparatory “coaching” for this purpose in every imaginary question that may be put to them in court. At the same time these natives may be in good positions, and, among natives, most respectable people, but who see no further harm in what they are doing than can be easily extorted, if need be, by a dinner to their caste-villagers or a dip in the Ganges. Even ready-made plaintiffs

are to be got for the occasion, with self-inflicted wounds, or complaining of robberies committed on and by themselves, with a full corps of witnesses, all ready to declare to the minutest details of same. These of course are equally available both for European or native. This may show the terrible work magistrates have, to separate the wheat from the tares, often wading for hours amid a labyrinth of falsehood with hardly a clue to guide them, and in the end having perhaps to base a judgment on the too minute agreement of details which indicate the "got-up" case. But in regard to this, as a rule, the European magistrate is far less easily deceived than the native. We have known "factory" case after case, all true as it chanced, go up before a native magistrate, and each in turn dismissed as false, either because the magistrate had come to suspect the factory generally, or was running to an opposite extreme to unseat a suspicion against himself of judicial bias towards the planters. The extraordinary power that capitalists can wield in India, whether for or against justice, may thus perhaps be evident, and may explain the unresisting position of the hungry cultivator in relation to the planter.

Among the subordinate arms of the law indigo-planting finds its help. The native police by their *moral influence* over the villages in the country divisions of which they have charge, are found most valuable in the interests of indigo, subservient as their aid is to the charm of the all-powerful rupee. For example, where any resistance to indigo is threatened, or a law case in which the "factory" is concerned arises in a village, there the persuasive powers of the police come into operation, for the benefit of the side that profits them most.

Even the humblest of all government officials and subordinate of the native police, the village chowkeedar (watchman), contributes his little quota of help to indigo-planting. This official is appointed to watch over his own village, keep down thefts and robberies, and report all misdemeanours to the police. Himself usually a thief, and always chosen from the thief or Aiheer caste, on the principle of thief to catch thief, he is supposed to be peculiarly adapted for his post. Instead, however, of being the faithful guardian of his own village, as was fondly hoped, he is too frequently a sleeping partner in robberies committed within it, planned by himself, and *perpetrated by his outside confederates*, besides taking an active part in robberies perpetrated in other villages. Lastly, he is the pliable medium for "serving out" *troublesome* factory tenants. At a hint he can cause a mal-content's bullock to disappear without leaving trace to entail detection, or as suddenly to reappear, according as required. It is, indeed, a common thing for a villager to propitiate this *medium*, under promise of good faith, for a return of property which had disappeared on his (the medium's) own or an employer's account. Of late, happily, his predatory resources

have been somewhat curtailed sequent to a suggestion by an Anglo-Indian, in a Calcutta newspaper, which, on his return from a trip home, he found in force in its leading features. Still, however, his scope for private enterprise remains larger than might be wished for the weal of the community.

Instances might be multiplied of the *modus operandi* of indigo-planting by which the planter contests the field when pitted against the native. Within the imaginary boundary line of a factory not far distant from the military station of Segowlie, Bengal, during certain "indigo rows," or a temporary "plant" of the natives against indigo cultivation, a Brahmin and small landowner took a leading part in stirring up the villages to resistance, and was therefore specially obnoxious to the factory. This individual happened to be high in favour with a rajah who owned nearly all the land thereabout and most of the villages which comprised the planter's "factory," and thus had the greater power and influence as a popular leader. When loudest in his demonstrations and defiances of the factory, suddenly one morning a large rafter was missed from an important country bridge in the neighbourhood, leaving a wide and dangerous gap in the centre, and suspicion, *somehow*, turned towards the Brahmin. While he was indignantly denying all knowledge of the matter, the rafter, to his unfeigned astonishment, *was discovered in his wheat field close to his house*, and the stern arm of the law took hold of him. A long term of imprisonment was passed upon him, which no efforts of his friend the rajah could avert or mitigate. His land was sold to defray the expenses of his trial, bought up by the factory, and sown down in indigo; and the villagers, seeing their ill-fated-leader come to such signal grief through his opposition to the factory, as both they and the rajah shrewdly divined, soon showed signs of penitence and return to "reason" as had been anticipated.

A fruitful source of strife and means of calling into play all the indigo-planting engines of war is the process of acquiring lands for indigo, and the various devices and intriguing incident thereto, whereby the planter finds himself pitted against the native. This is an ever-recurring branch of the industry, and one in which every planter must be an expert. The first steps of his novitiate, in fact, all teach him how to turn the mild Hindoo to the greatest possible profit with the least possible cost; to walk with him, if practicable, if not to walk round or over him, and that with the least regard to whining sentiment in the process. Money must be made to retire home upon, and the mild Hindoo must be squeezed for the purpose if necessary. Another element of strife is the least infringement on the planter's self-adjudged monopoly of his industry, should this occur within an arbitrary boundary line with which he has encircled a certain tract of country he calls his *dehauth* or "factory." To the greater part of this, however, he may have about as much title as to the Duchy of Lancas-

ter. At the same time, should a native, be he even a resident proprietor there, think of bettering himself by starting an indigo factory within this tract, it may be on his own lands, or on lands which, like the European, he has acquired in lease for the purpose, he immediately meets with the most fierce and active opposition. Then arise hand-to-hand fights and prolonged litigation in which the weakest purse generally succumbs. An instance in point occurred within the so-called domain of a large factory in a northern district between Patna and Nepaul.

An enterprising native of some means, and a landowner there, seeing the large profits the English planter was making in indigo, bethought himself of increasing his capital after the same fashion, and thereupon set about building a factory and cultivating indigo on his own and on other lands he obtained in lease. The first symptom of this intention was the signal for numerous warnings to him from the European of the danger and audacity of such a step, along with stern orders to desist. These he had temerity enough to neglect, replying that he was taking nothing from the planter, that the country was open to all, and that he was building and cultivating on land to which for the most part he had even more claim than had the planter to his. Why, therefore, should the planter seek to interfere with or injure him? These were arguments whose wretched sophistry only served to irritate rather than appease the outraged Briton. The idea of a nigger starting in the midst of his "dehauth," to infringe his hitherto undisputed prestige and monopoly there—if nothing else—was a thing not to be heard of. The situation must be made too hot for him at all costs. The native, on the other hand, was the more emboldened to hold his own by the fact that he had a relative across the river who had victoriously resisted similar onslaughts from a European adversary in his neighbourhood, till, having been found incorrigible, he had been suffered to settle down in peace and quietness. Thus Ramlal Sahai's factory gradually assumed shape in spite of all that was being said or done to hinder it; despite repeated hints that his bricks and building material might have to be sought for some fine morning in the bottom of the river; that his walls might be found crumbling down from a mixture of saltpetre in the mortar; or that his whole establishment might be discovered some night in flames while his indigo cakes were drying on the shelves. Ramlal, however, still pursued his way rejoicing, and figuratively snapped his fingers at the factory. The thannahdar, or native police inspector, who was stationed in Ramlal's village, was reported to be *neutral*, owing to propitiating influences from *both* sides; therefore extreme repressive measures would not be prudent at present. Ramlal, accordingly, got his couple of vats built to start with, his press-house, drying-house, &c. erected; and his first little crop of indigo was duly manufactured, in the midst of his enemy's

camp, so to speak, giving a tidy little profit and promise of more. Still he had come into no violent collision with the European. But now, in trying to secure more land to extend his cultivation, he found greater difficulty than hitherto ere the planter had been fully aware of his movements. Now he had an active and angry competitor to meet in every negotiation, and the Brahmins and petty landowners, who had never dreamed of letting out their "Birits" and "Jagheers," rushed into the field to make capital out of the contest and secure between the rivals the highest bid for their lands. For a while there was nothing but rushing to and fro of landholders between European and native to extol their tempting baits and receive offers and counter offers up to double the value of their land. In this conflict the European secured lands, good, bad or indifferent, at fancy prices, so as to outbid his rival at all costs, harass him, and narrow around him his field for enterprise. One piece of land thus obtained hemmed Ramlaal up to his very vats, and other pieces availed to shut up all his roadways save one between his cultivation and factory. Indigo was sown by the planter in this land close to Ramlaal's vats, and chowkeedars were placed upon it day and night to catch, if possible, any bullocks of Ramlaal straying thereon, or get up some pretext for furnishing a case against him in the law courts. A fresh grievance to the planter was that his rival was paying higher rates for indigo cultivation, and was thus initiating a mischievous precedent that might spread—a thing not to be borne. As yet, however, this was all fair competition, all within the law, and still Ramlaal complacently viewed his adversary's ingenious devices of war, and still pursued his way rejoicing. Had he continued thus he might even for some time longer have kept his enemy at bay; but, encouraged by immunity, he grew over confident of success, and this proved to be his evil genius.

A piece of land, of which the ownership was disputed, lay near Ramlaal's factory, and of this Ramlaal obtained a lease from one of the two claimants; whereupon the European planter immediately obtained a similar lease from the other. When a collision seemed inevitable between the two lessees, Ramlaal suggested dividing the land, and each of them taking half, until the proprietorship should be settled at law, and thus also the question of the true lessee. Such a proposal, however, was regarded as an insult by the European, incompatible with the dignity of his factory, and only to be treated with the contempt it deserved. The occasion besides was far too good to let slip for a right-down row which might clear up matters more satisfactorily "one way or another." Accordingly, first came the European's ploughs to the field, but only to be met by Ramlaal's men-at-arms, the mere sight of whose fierce high-caste Rajpoots and Brahmins scattered incontinently the timid low-caste ploughmen. Then approached Ramlaal's ploughmen some days later, who in turn were success-

fully obstructed by the planter with the help of the native sub-inspector of police, who had been duly warned to the ground to "prevent a breach of the peace." When matters had quieted down again after a week or two, during which neither combatant invaded the field, suddenly, when Ramlaal was off guard, a strong posse of the planter's men appeared at the field, and succeeded in ploughing it up ere the enemy had time to oppose. Further preparations by the planter for the important process of sowing were permitted by Ramlaal under protest, who contented himself with saying that if the planter insisted on preparing the land, he, Ramlaal, should equally insist on sowing his share. His ideas were now growing apace, both with the support of the natives around him and, quietly, even with that of the planter's tenants themselves, who were all on the side of their countryman against the European. A crisis in the shape of the sowing season was now at hand, and each side armed for the struggle. Litigation was a mode of adjustment equally unthought of by either in view of the fame of a *vi et armis* victory, and, besides, as too prolonged and indefinite a method while the sowing season was meanwhile passing away. Large bodies of well-known fighters, Rajpoots and Aiheers, and whole villages of professional robbers, were duly signalled for active service on the European side, and the sinews of war were freely brought into play. Ramlaal on his part seemed to have full information of all that was going on in his adversary's camp, and was not behind in similar counter preparations. The fiery beacon, in the shape of inflammatory speeches and gifts of food and money, was freely circulated among the villagers around by Ramlaal in person; and among these plenty of men ready to respond to his call were found, besides the promised help from his cousin across the river. On the European's side were mostly hirelings with little or no enthusiasm in their task; Ramlaal's men were heart and soul in their work and determined to win. The "night before the battle" the planter's troops quietly filed into the appointed ground in the dead of night, were reviewed and feed, and silently passed on to their destination through the darkness. Next morning the planter's drills, accompanied only by the ordinary servants, were duly sent to the field to sow it in indigo. Not a man of the ambushed troops of either side was yet to be seen, but no sooner did the drills enter the field than a few men started up as if by magic and rushed to stop them. This was the signal for the planter's men to emerge from their ambushade, and simultaneously uprose Ramlaal's men in hundreds to meet them with fierce yells and shouts of defiance. The fight was but brief, for presently the planter's forces were scattering in full flight before the fierce charge of their adversary, and ere it was well begun the conflict was over. Brief though it was, however, one man was left dead on the field, and some half-dozen others were badly disabled to the extent of broken legs and arms; all the

casualties without exception being among the planter's men. The only individuals who showed fight at all on the European side were the professional robbers, and even they had soon to yield before the furious onslaught of the foe. No sooner was the fight over than Ramlaal's partizans, cooling down, became terrified at the issue of their victory, and were hurriedly dispersing, when, suddenly bethinking themselves of the dead body, a few of them returned in order to cast it into the river, and so obliterate the most telling evidence against them. Ere the field was reached, however, the planter's men, anticipating this, were already bearing it away towards the factory. On the other hand information was promptly sent by the planter to the European superintendent of police at the nearest civil station to the effect that an attack had been made on his servants while in the ordinary and lawful discharge of their duties, whereby one was killed and several severely wounded. In due course arrived the superintendent surrounded by his satellites in red and blue, and who, after inspecting the body, began his cross-examination of the factory servants in the usual forcible, *argumentum-ad-hominem* way in which such proceedings are conducted in India. From this hour the planter's domain might be said to be taken possession of by the police. His indigo work and cultivation came almost to a stand-still, the villagers became indifferent to their fields growing over-run with weeds, and the factory servants powerless to enforce orders. The ubiquitous symbols of the law were to be found patrolling every village throughout the factory, to obtain, strange to say in this instance, evidence if possible *against* the factory, despite the fact of all the casualties being found among its men. One explanation of such an anomaly was, it seems, a growing suspicion among the heads of departments that the European factories were generally at the bottom of all such rows, and therefore the police must needs excel themselves in extracting light out of darkness. Another rumoured explanation was an incautious letter to an Indian paper by an European member of the factory touching the inefficiency of the native police, which had elicited the publicly-expressed after-dinner wish of the superintendent that he might but have said writer some day within his grasp. The first proceeding of the police accordingly was to marshal some dozen of the planter's servants into durance, at a time they were most urgently needed at their work, and thereafter to devote their whole attention to increasing this number without making a single effort to arrest the perpetrators of the casualties. The arrival of an English lawyer on the scene speedily changed this anomalous state of things, taking the case as he did, not a moment too soon, out of the hands of the over-ridden native lawyers. The dozen servants of the planter were promptly but reluctantly discharged by the native magistrate, after they had been about a fortnight in durance without a charge against them!

This was only done, however, upon a threat from the barrister that, failing their immediate release, damages would be claimed from the court by the factory for loss suffered from their illegal detention.

Failing success in this quarter the police now directed their attention to the side that had caused the death of one man and wounds to so many, as if for the first time they had woken to this new phase of the question. The wretched Ramlaal was a fugitive in hiding, but was soon arrested along with some dozen of his most prominent fighters, and as many as could be included along with them against whom the factory had had a grudge, and against whom the planter's released servants now became the sole witnesses! Ramlaal was conducted in ignominy past the bungalow of his enemy, under a blazing sun during the burning hot winds of April, *en route* for the jail some eight miles further on. While passing here word was quietly conveyed to the planter that, should he wish, he might now gratify himself with a sight of his humbled foe, and might further greatly enhance the *pleasure* of that foe's remaining journey by a rupee or two to the attendant constables. One walked on each side of him to prompt him onwards by word or cuff, and another followed to prod him from the rear. The poor wretch himself petitioned to see and plead with his late rival, thinking that now, in his hour of triumph, that rival might have the will as well as the ability to mitigate the future that appeared to lie before him.

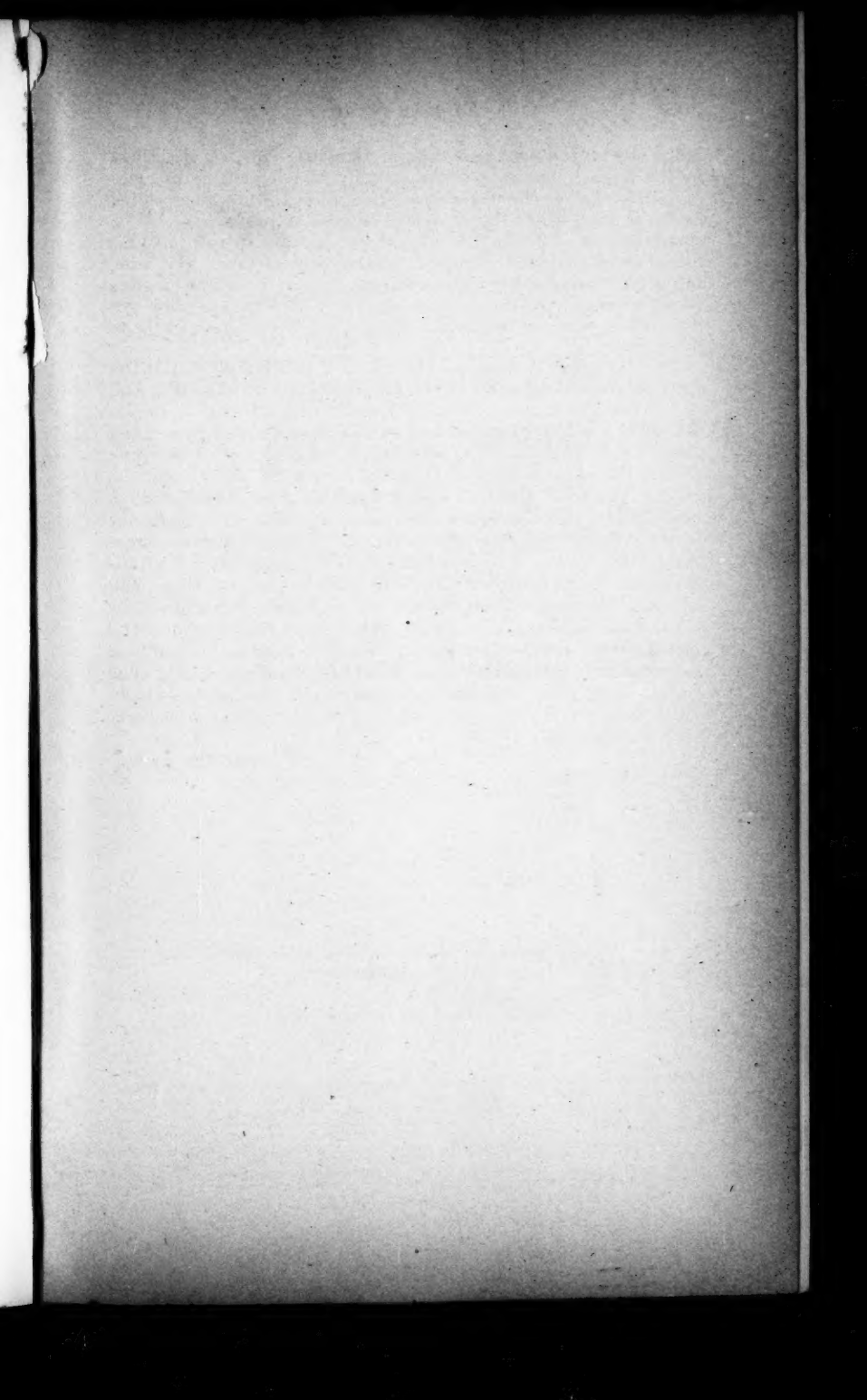
The case came before the native deputy-magistrate who had been so ready to incarcerate the planter's men, and who, after much brain cudgelling and searchings of heart, professed himself fearful to cope with a case so momentous, and beseeched his European superior to take it off his hands. The district magistrate in turn handed it over to the sessions judge, who sentenced the whole batch to transportation for life. Ramlaal, on hearing the sentence, dropped down in court, and asked that his life might be taken instead. His large property, which in his extremity he had recklessly left in the hands of others to meet as required the enormous expenses of his ill-fated step, had already dwindled almost to nothing in their keeping. Each of them had his own large slice to take out of it, and this with impunity in a case where there were no receipts to show for mostly illegal disbursements. An appeal from the judgement to the Calcutta High Court was, however, duly announced.

Ramlaal had two wives, which the Hindoo customs permit when one is childless. One of these now announced her intention of braving the privacy belonging to her station and sex, and proceeding herself to Calcutta to intercede personally at the judge's house on behalf of her husband. When the date for the appeal came on she duly carried out her intention, and set forth on her journey. At the High Court the decision of the country

judge was for the most part upset. Ramlaal's case was described by the English barrister, whom, happily, the defendants had employed, as that of the "one ewe lamb" of Scripture, represented by his factory, which the European coveted and rested not till he should obtain or destroy. Ramlaal was set free to return to his house and family, but a ruined, broken-spirited man. His wife, returning triumphantly in his company, received the honours due to a heroine. With regard to the other defendants they got diminished terms of imprisonment, varying from some months to five years.

The European factory, on the other hand, though it lost the fight gained a victory in the end far more effectual than if it had won. On the incarceration of Ramlaal and friends, it immediately began to recover tenfold its lost prestige and power, and the ryots soon became more submissive and pliable than ever, and oftener than ever to be seen apostrophizing with folded hands the mighty power of the "Company Bahadoor." Ramlaal's indigo lands had by this time grown into sheets of weeds, without money to cultivate them, and soon after his factory buildings were bought up by his victorious rival at an old song. His land, his grain boats, and flourishing trade in country produce, became all things of the past. Even the roof above his head was claimed by a grasping creditor, who forced him to exchange his ancestral quarters for a comparative hovel. The last recorded of him is as a prematurely grey-headed man, tilling his small patch of ground for his daily bread, like one of the poorest of the hand-to-mouth cultivators around him—and thus falls the curtain on the true drama of Ramlaal.

CHARLES GREY.





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See "FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS."